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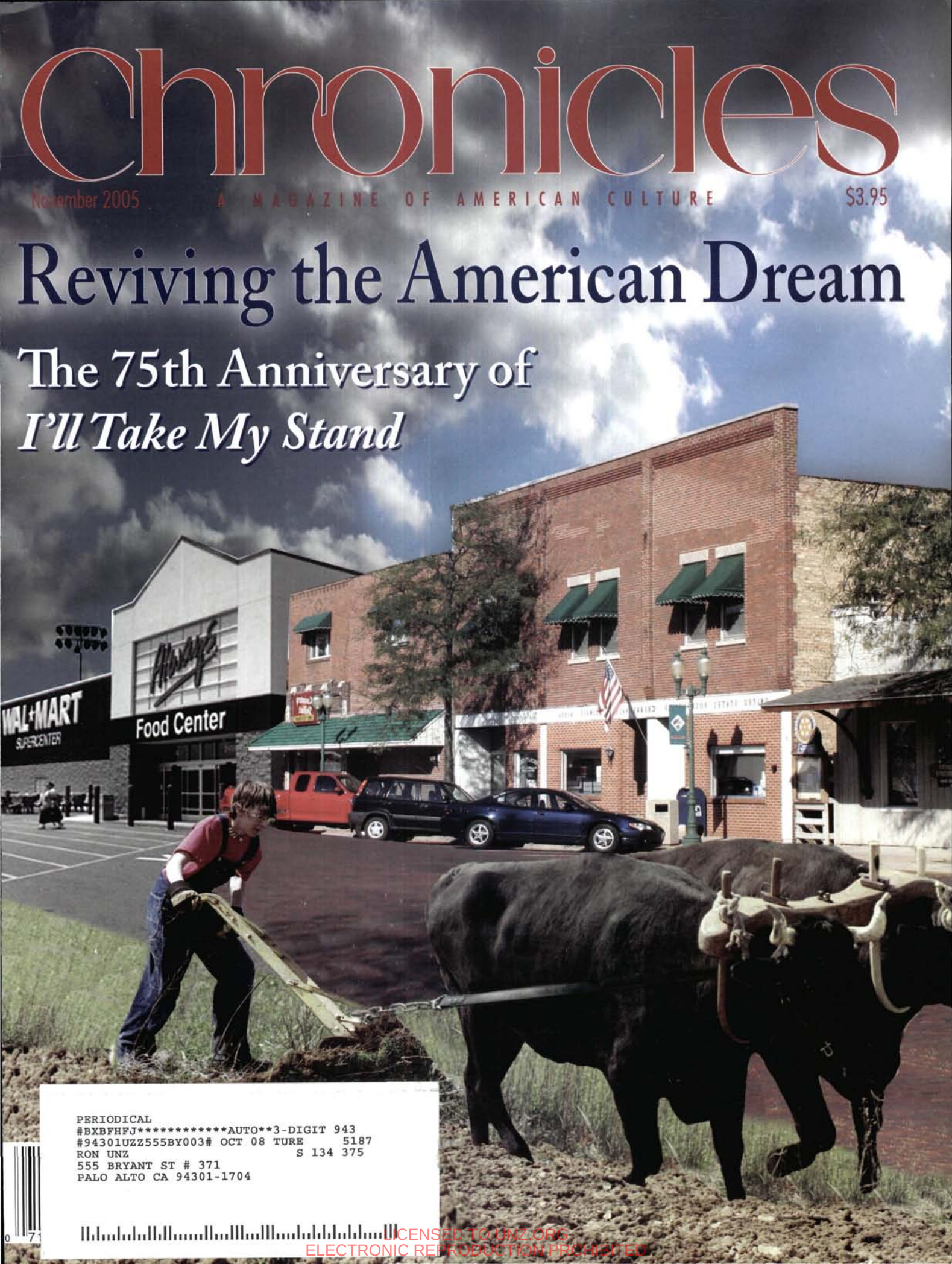

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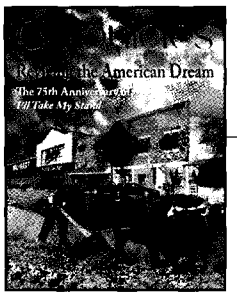

PERSPECTIVE

Agrarianism From Hesiod to Bradford 10
by Thomas Fleming

Life in community.

VIEWS

The Old South, the New South, and the Real South 14
by Tom Landess
Taking off the Yankee spectacles.

Reattacking Leviathan 17
by Mark Royden Winchell
Starving the beast.

The Case for American Secession 20
by Kirkpatrick Sale
Still a good idea.

The Writer as Farmer 23
by James Everett Kibler
Under Heaven.

NEWS

Solving U.S. Problems in Korea Through Unification 26
by Edward A. Olsen
A surprising solution.

REVIEWS

Misinterpreting Iran—and the World 29
by Leon Hadar

Kenneth M. Pollack: *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*

Paul Gottfried on Daniel J. Mahoney's *Bertrand de Jouvenel: The Conservative Liberal and the Illusions of Modernity* ◆ **Derek Turner** on David Conway's *In Defence of the Realm* ◆ **Thomas Fleming** on Thomas Moore's *The Hunt for Confederate Gold* ◆ 33

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Alabama: Taking Down the Fiddle 39
by Michael Hill

Letter From Bogotá: FARC Meets the Junior League 40
by Brian Kirkpatrick

VITAL SIGNS

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: **Is Mexico the Next Colombia?** 44
by Ted Galen Carpenter

COMMONWEAL: **A Different Past** 45
by Troy Kickler

COLUMNS

BREAKING GLASS 13
by Philip Jenkins

THE ROCKFORD FILES 37
by Scott P. Richert

THE AMERICAN INTEREST 42
by Srdja Trifkovic

IN THE DARK 47
The Constant Gardener
by George McCartney

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD 49
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

AMERICAN PROSCENIUM 6

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 7

POETRY
In Late November 22
by David Middleton

ON THE COVER

Cover and inside illustrations by Melanie Anderson.
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A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5813.
Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.

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Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture
(ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $39.99 (foreign subscriptions add $12 for surface delivery, $48 for Air Mail) per year by The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Preferred periodical postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Chronicles, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
Vol. 29, No. 11 November 2005
Printed in the United States of America

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Welfare Queens

Doug Bandow does a very good job in his article "The Republican Party's Welfare Queens" (*Views*, August) of detailing all the various queens and their courts in the Republican Party, all of which are parasites on the taxpayer. What he does not do, however, is to detail the cultural circumstances that have turned the GOP from a party of fiscal responsibility to one of drunken sailors. Because of this transformation, deficit spending will continue in the federal government even if Republican legislators grow balls of steel.

The GOP's power in Congress rests upon several states and congressional districts, both in the South and elsewhere, that were once represented by conservative Democrats. These fellows were conservative, however, only in regard to social or moral issues. When it came to federal spending, they were the most liberal Democrats one could find in Congress. Because these "conservative" Democrats no longer fit into the culturally Marxist post-1968 Democratic Party, they became Republicans.

But once a Democrat, always a Democrat. These newly converted Republicans never ceased in helping out their own districts or their favored constituency groups. Republican politicians such as Saxby Chambliss, Trent Lott, Thad Cochrane, Zach Wamp, and others are simply playing the same roles old Democrats such as Richard Russell, James O. Eastland, Wright Patman, and Mendell Rivers once played, redistributing our tax dollars to their states and supporters. Ask Tennessee Republicans if they wish to privatize the Tennessee Valley Authority, and they will turn into staunch New Dealers.

Democrats (and today's big-government conservatives) believe in government spending because it wins elections. Big-government conservatives now make up nearly 30 percent of the electorate, according to the Pew Foundation. These fellows have never bought into Taft or Goldwater or even early Reagan conservatism—and they never will.

Most Republicans are either indifferent to deficit spending or enthusiastic, especially now that the "War on Terror" has provided new ways to dole out government goodies to their home states and districts.

—*Sean Scallon*
Arkansaw, WI

Mr. Bandow Replies:

Mr. Scallon certainly is correct that many of the former Democrats never put up much pretense of believing in traditional conservative fiscal principles. However, support for those same principles seems absent among congressmen representing historically Republican districts as well.

Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) heads the Republican Study Committee, which is advocating "Operation Offset"—that is, spending cuts to balance Hurricane Katrina-related spending. But Pence, like so many other members, benefited from the pork lavished far and wide by the transportation bill that was largely drafted by, and named after the wife of, Rep. Don Young (R-AK). Neither are former Southern Democrats.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL, from the one-time GOP heartland of Illinois, was the primary force behind the passage, through procedural legerdemain, of the irresponsible Medicare pharmaceutical benefit. He also joined House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX)—before the latter's indictment-induced leave of absence—in browbeating Representative Pence and others who criticized the GOP's fiscal irresponsibility. Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) says that he was hooted down by the Republican House caucus when he pushed for countervailing spending cuts after Katrina, and the insults do not appear to have been limited to Southerners, let alone former Democrats.

On Chinese Division

Dr. Srdja Trifkovic's "Getting China Straight" (*The American Interest*, August) is, for the most part, an intelligent and thorough analysis of the looming presence of China on the world stage. Unfortunately, Dr. Trifkovic concludes with a suggestion—admittedly only one among many that he brings forward—

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that is fraught with peril.

In his final paragraph, he writes: "The task of U.S. policy in East Asia should be to consider whether, and to what extent, [Chinese] aspirations are compatible with American interests. Contemplating the possibility of a consensual, carefully managed, and internationally condoned reunification of China with Taiwan would be a constructive first step."

A few paragraphs earlier, he writes, "If the Communist Party of China continues to transform itself into a Red Kuomintang, a guided democracy will eventually emerge, . . . and economic growth will continue on a stable footing." Unfortunately, that is a very substantial *if*. A very realistic *if* would involve the Communist Party exploiting and transforming China's economic growth into military power, then forcing a reunification with Taiwan by direct military conquest or its brazen threat. This might then tempt the Chinese to reach for greater prizes still, with the attendant danger of a catastrophic collision with the United States. We do well to remember that China is a male-dominant society with a huge population. War, even nuclear war, may not hold the salutary terror for the Chinese that it does for other modern nations. Dr. Trifkovic, to his credit, acknowledges this as a potential reality in the early part of his column.

It is essential that the United States not permit Mainland China to force a reunification with Taiwan against the will of the people of Taiwan. Engaging in such a blatant appeasement may only whet the appetite of the Chinese and encourage them in the delusion that the policy of force comes with no risks or adverse consequences. Our present policy of permitting technological transfers to China and abetting her economic growth is foolish, indeed. Countries such as Iraq, Serbia, and North Korea that the United States is so fond of confronting really pose no serious threat to us, but the Chinese do. We had best wake up to that painful reality, and soon.

It is certainly true that the United States, in standing between China and Taiwan, also risks the collision that all sane people would desire to avoid. This risk, I believe, must at some point be taken. At present, the United States still holds a significant edge in technology and also holds the economic trump card of denying China access to American markets. If we connive in the Chinese conquest of Taiwan today (and that is precisely what reunification would be if brought about by thinly veiled force against the will of the people of Taiwan), we will confirm the Chinese leadership in the mistaken view that the United States is a paper tiger and invite future Chinese aggressions. Will we be better off confronting China over Japan or Hawaii or the Panama Canal (or even California) at some future date when our technical edge has been eroded and China's economy has grown to the point that the loss of American markets would not be a fatal blow?

I do not believe that Dr. Trifkovic is promoting appeasement in his essay. Rather, he is spelling out the various evolutions and policy responses that these evolutions should engender. Nonetheless, I believe that a more pessimistic concluding paragraph would have been constructive. Dr. Trifkovic's essay would have been perfected, in my humble opinion, if the end had been the beginning and the beginning, the end.

—John A. Collins
Wheaton, FL

Dr. Trifkovic Replies:

I am not promoting appeasement, which is a state of mind, not a policy. I am promoting realism, and the options are fairly clear.

If America wants to prevent the transformation of China into a first-class power capable of exercising regional hegemony in the greater part of Asia, America needs to fight a preventive war with China in the next three to five years. That war would entail using nuclear weapons and reducing both China's population and her economic potential to the point where it would need another "Great Leap Forward," some time in the 22nd century, to start catching up again.

Failing that, America has to accept the fact that the regional balance will change to her detriment, and she has to rearrange her priorities accordingly. The long-term American interests in the East Asia-Pacific region are to promote political stability, to maintain access to regional markets, and to secure freedom of navigation. It is also desirable to prevent the rise of a potentially hostile hegemon, but if the rise of China cannot be prevented—and the gap between American economic interests, on one hand, and *status quo*-oriented security interests, on the other, remains unbridgeable—it is necessary to remove the causes of potential hostility.

The only pragmatic solution, regarding Taiwan, is to reiterate the old "One China" policy of previous presidents. Taipei must refrain from any move toward independence, which should be easy to achieve considering its dependence on U.S. weapons and diplomatic support. At the same time, the United States should keep repeating to Beijing that there would be very real costs, military as well as economic, if China were to attack Taiwan.

China will do no such thing unless some separatist hotheads in Taipei decide to try their luck. Quite apart from the U.S. response, Beijing wants to present itself to other governments in the region as a responsible regional player. Any sign of heavy-handedness over Taiwan would prompt them to participate in a new U.S.-sponsored anti-Chinese alliance that would degrade the fruits of two decades of Beijing's diplomacy in the region.

The situation is manageable for many years to come, but its management requires American acquiescence in principle to the final objective of reunification. Even if we witness the further democratization of China, that will by no means make Beijing any less determined to treat Taiwan as one of its provinces.

As for the very long term, the path of China's expansion will lead north to Siberia and south to Australia. Hawaii will be safe for our grandchildren to retire to, and coastal California will no longer be there anyway.

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by Doug Bandow

Democracy or Liberty

For some, the drafting of the Iraqi constitution has called to mind America's founding. But whether any constitution will deliver liberty or democracy to Iraq's people remains tragically uncertain.

The failure of Washington to find WMDs in Iraq or to link Baghdad to anti-U.S. terrorism forced the Bush administration to find an alternate justification for the war. The President and many of his supporters settled on democracy promotion, effectively stealing Woodrow Wilson's disastrous legacy from the Democratic Party.

Nowhere has the democratic process been watched more closely than in Iraq. Lebanese elections have dampened Syrian influence, but at the cost of moving anti-American politicians center stage.

Small Saudi Arabian reform moves have aided fundamentalists more than liberals. The leaders of Egypt and Pakistan do little more than mouth democratic platitudes, but real elections would likely aid anti-American jihadists.

Iraq, however, is Washington's showcase—liberated, occupied, and recreated by U.S. troops. If coercive nation building can succeed anywhere, it should be in Iraq.

Elections for a transitional government began the process. Alas, Washington's candidate, interim prime minister Iyad Allawi, developed no serious popular following. Despite complaints in Washington about ungrateful clients, the Iraqis chose other leaders.

Still, the constitution remained to be written. Would-be nation builders, from administration staffers to media heavyweights, were free with advice. The constitution should enshrine women's rights and protect religious liberties. It should create a federal structure and separate law from Islam.

American activists protested, and Washington officials cajoled. As the original August 15 deadline—desperately extended in the attempt to win Sunni agreement—for the constitution approached, Preeta D. Bansal and Nina Shea, members of the U.S Commission on International Religious Freedom, wrote that "Now is not the time for the international community to take a hands-off approach, which it may be tempted to do by a false sense of cultural relativism and a misguided 'respect' for a flawed 'democratic' process that could, ultimately, lead to undemocratic results."

Some Iraqis also urged U.S. pressure. Basma Fakri, president of the Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq, said Washington should let the constitution writers know "that Iraq should be free."

American Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad actively intervened in Baghdad, proclaiming Washington's support for equal rights. "There can be no compromise," he declared.

U.S. pressure seems to have had some effect, though sections of the draft document still disappointed many. Then Sunni leaders denounced the proposal, which went to the Iraqi voters. Alas, the actual result probably never mattered much.

Obviously, constitutions are important—but only if they are enforced. And that requires a particular civic culture, political discourse, and legal regime. At the moment, Iraq appears to lack all of these.

The United States cannot provide the necessary means of enforcement. Today, U.S. military occupation does not guarantee basic security.

A constitutional provision guaranteeing equal treatment will do Iraqi women no good if it is ignored by political authorities. Promises of fair treatment for Christians and others matter little if the Iraqi government cannot or will not protect religious minorities from attacks by conservative Muslims.

Even formal democratic governance will mean little if authoritarian elements abuse their power. After all, the Soviet Union was notable for the professed liberality of its constitution. Dozens of smaller hellholes dotting the globe officially modeled their governments after the American or British system.

If the Iraqi constitution ends up as a liberal document in an illiberal society, it might not be completely valueless. It could offer idealistic goals and provide a legal basis for real reform if the political culture changed.

However, the most pressing objective for those in the West who hope for a better future for Iraq is to promote within Iraqi society a greater appreciation of the importance of liberty. Democracy is a worthy means, but it is only a means. The objective is, or should be, a free society.

And this is what makes America's present challenge in Iraq so great. "The idea that 1,800 American troops died so Iraqi women can enjoy the full blessings of religious medievalism ought to disturb the Bush administration and the American public," editorialized the *New Republic*. Absolutely. "No American blood should be spilt for the creation of a sharia rule state," said Nina Shea. Very true.

But it is far easier to teach the efficient forms of political democracy than the civil forms of political discourse. Without a tolerant civic culture, real democracy is unlikely to flourish. And given the violent resistance against U.S. occupation forces even two years after the ouster of Saddam Hussein, Washington has neither the time nor the ability to educate the Iraqi people.

In fact, the best policy would be to do less. The U.S. government should begin withdrawing troops while emphasizing its intention to pull out all of its forces expeditiously. Moreover, Washington should publicly disclaim any interest in acquiring permanent bases. Iraq's destiny will be in the hands of Iraqis.

More helpful may be the efforts of private groups that are not tainted by Washington's obvious political agenda. They can develop personal ties, model civil behavior, and teach Iraqi citizens the historic meaning of liberty. But this is a long-term project.

Iraq's constitutional negotiations should be seen as a start, not an end. They have opened the first political discussions in decades. They have highlighted the importance of a vibrant legal and political process. But whether they will eventually lead to a peaceful, let alone free, society is unknowable.

Necessary, but yet to be built, is the foundation of a truly liberal order: a belief in freedom and a willingness to accept adverse political outcomes. Unfortunately, creating such a democratic ethic almost certainly lies beyond Washington's best efforts. C

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BILL CLINTON has summoned "his own mini-General Assembly of presidents, prime ministers, kings and other pooh-bahs" to devise plans for "addressing poverty, global warming, religious conflict and better governance."

The inaugural meeting of what the perjurer in chief modestly calls the Clinton Global Initiative has brought together 800 bigwigs who paid $15,000 each for a seat (which adds up to a neat $12 million in entrance fees alone).

Clinton also asked each attendee to "commit" to doing something to improve the world, by which he really means money. They have obliged, and over 50 such pledges have been made so far, totaling more than $300 million, including an Africa investment fund and a plan to fight AIDS. "What is happening here is the kind of intense dialogue between different people and cultures which should take place at the U.N. but can't anymore because of highly ritualistic structures, protocol and conflict avoidance," explained Richard C. Holbrooke, former U.N. ambassador under Clinton and John Kerry's foreign-affairs advisor during his presidential campaign.

So far, so predictable: A failed President with no scruples and a flair for p.r. is fighting for his legacy and making a killing along the way. The bad news is that the circus was attended by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Her predecessor, Colin Powell, is reported to have cancelled an appearance at a conference on AIDS in Nigeria in April 2001 because Clinton decided to attend. For reasons mysterious, the Bush administration has decided to relegitimize Clinton.

That the administration is making a mistake is evident from the record and character of Clinton himself, of course; but it is also evident from the list of Distinguished Panelists provided by the Initiative. It includes South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, whose major contribution to the AIDS debate is his highly controversial assertion that such "traditional attitudes" of African men as violence against women and promiscuity do not play a significant role in spreading the disease—for which he has been attacked by, among others, his predecessor Nelson Mandela. The position of South Africa's doctors is clear: Unless the president changes his views on the matter, "he will not be in the position to lead the country's campaign against the virus."

Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo is there, too. His experiences may be useful to the "better governance" panel, as he is the head of what is arguably one of the most corrupt states in the world—certainly so in terms of the estimated amount of money directly stolen from its coffers by leaders past and present: $420 billion, an amount that equals all Western aid to Africa over the past four decades.

Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko is on board, which is appropriate in view of his almost Clintonesque talent for not letting mere facts stand in the way of his creativity. Yushchenko's claim that the former Ukrainian authorities tried to poison him using dioxin came in very handy during his stage-managed presidential campaign last November, but it remains unproved more than a year later, because Yushchenko has reneged on his pledge to undergo tests in the Ukraine.

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Ergodan is also there, presumably as a specialist on "religious conflict." Before reinventing himself, this "post-Islamist" leader of his anything-but-post-Islamic country declared that "the mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers." His party resisted legislation aimed at reducing violence against women, and, last year, its deputies were persuaded only with difficulty to remove the imprisonment of adulterers from the statute books.

The role of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who is also on board, will probably be to work in tandem with Obasanjo on "better governance." To that task, he can contribute his extensive experience in managing the Oil for Food Program in Iraq.

The grim list goes on: that prominent humanitarian Madeleine Albright, Al Gore (remember him?), Paul Wolfowitz, Rupert Murdoch, and, of course, George Soros.

Soros is probably the most deserving member of the Clinton Global Initiative. He has contributed tens of millions to America Coming Together and *MoveOn.org* and to the "Center for American Progress," run by "third way" Clintonites John Podesta (formerly of the Democratic Leadership Council), Morton Halperin, and Gene Sperling.

Soros wants to fight poverty in the Third World, having made a contribution to its spread. His major contribution to the AIDS epidemic has been a successful kick-start—through a network of his "Open Society Foundations"—to (previously nonexistent) homosexual activism all over Eastern Europe. The campaign for "LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender] Rights" is directed from Budapest, publishing lesbian and "gay" books in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Slovakia and opening "Gay" and Lesbian Centers in the Ukraine and Rumania.

Clinton's and Soros' brand of one-world transnationalism are one and the same. Their radical mind-set dominates the Democratic Party, of course; but it is puzzling that their rabidly antitraditionalist and deeply anti-Western worldview and political agenda should be legitimized and even implicitly supported by the Bush administration.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

AS AMERICA drifts away from orthodox religious belief, God becomes less and less personal and more and more political. The secular world surrounds and absorbs the spiritual. In the 21st century, the Lord joins political parties, circulates petitions, stumps for candidates. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, in a *Chicago Sun-Times* column, tells us that "[a] conservative Christian is a contradiction in terms . . . Jesus was a liberal . . . "

Small wonder that evangelical Christians—accustomed to seeing God's hand in the workings of the world—attributed the devastating consequences of Katrina and Rita to God's anger over a variety of misbehaviors. You would expect Pat Robertson to blame the winds and flooding on abortion, and he did (though he did *not* say—as reported by *Dateline Hollywood*—that Katrina was God's punishment for allowing New Orleans-reared Ellen Degeneres to host the Emmy Awards). Michael Marcavage, director of Repent America, went even further: "[W]e must not forget that the citizens of New Orleans tolerated and welcomed the wickedness in their city for

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so long . . . May this act of God cause us all to think about what we tolerate in our city limits, and bring us trembling before the throne of Almighty God."

Surprisingly, however, many commentators attributed these disasters to a left-leaning deity, one who punishes both our domestic wrongs and our sins abroad. Environmentalists claimed that God was chastising America for SUVs and aerosol cans. Others saw the hurricanes as retribution for social injustice. Thus, Rabbi Michael Lerner wrote that "this is a classic case of the law of karma, or what the Torah warns of environmental disaster unless we create a just society, or what others call watching the chickens come home to roost, or what goes around comes around."

Some saw Katrina and Rita as punishment for America's intervention in the Middle East. Muslim websites were filled with triumphalist rhetoric: "Allahu akbar. Soldiers of God, Hurricane Katrina demolishes America. Don't think that God doesn't care about the injustices of tyrants."

Conversely, supporters of Israel claimed that God sent the devastation to chastise America for her role in forcing Jewish settlers to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. Rabbi Ovadia Yoself (cited on Al Jazeera's website) put it this way: "Bush was behind the (expulsion of) Gush Katif. He encouraged Sharon to expel Gush Katif . . . we had 15,000 people expelled here, and there 150,000 (were expelled). It was God's retribution."

Black political leaders mixed Divine attribution with the usual attacks on white racism. Lewis E. Logan, a Los Angeles AME pastor, shouted: "[I]t is not a coincidence that it is exactly 50 years from the time of (inaudible) lynching and murder. That it is not a coincidence that the storm's name is a sister. Katrina. For she represents the collective cries of mothers who have lost their sons (applause) to the brutality (louder applause) and the murderous grip of this racist white supremacist American culture (frenzied applause)."

In far-off California, it was easy to ignore the obvious: that blacks suffered disproportionately from Katrina and Rita. At ground zero, Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans avoided that mistake. In a diatribe laced with obscenities and snarling accusations, he warned of future wrath, saying, "I have no idea what [federal officials] are doing. But I will tell you this: You know, God is looking down on all this, and if they are not doing everything in their power to save people, they are going to pay the price."

Apparently, not one of these commentators entertained the idea that *his* people could be responsible for God's wrath—or for the chaos that followed. Only political enemies were to blame. Thus, while denouncing the President, Nagin excused looters by saying they were merely looking for food and water. (The TV cameras caught black policewomen in an abandoned Wal-Mart, leisurely filling their shopping carts with clothes.) Snipers shot at rescue teams with the same moral certitude that the mayor displayed, and the corpses of hundreds of drowned school buses yellowed the water, while the mayor called on Washington to send every available Greyhound to New Orleans.

At this point, God—hearing each faction claim His favor—must have regretted stirring up those hurricanes in the first place.

—*Tom Landess*

GEORGE W. BUSH was lauded in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* in the summer of 2003 by Fred Barnes, editor of the *Weekly Standard*, for promoting a new brand of "conservatism." According to Barnes, President Bush is a "big government conservative," and his administration believes "in using what would normally be seen as liberal means—activist government—for conservative ends. And they're willing to spend more and increase the size of government in the process." Later in the same article, Barnes noted that "big government conservatives are favorably disposed toward what neoconservative Irving Kristol has called a 'conservative welfare state.'" Then, in an understatement, Barnes added: "Neocons tend to be big government conservatives."

A cynic might suggest that what Barnes was really saying was that there is nothing wrong with big government, so long as "our guys" are in charge.

To give Fred Barnes his due, he did acknowledge that there had been a "surge of federal spending" during Bush's presidency, resulting in "swollen deficits." (A Cato Institute study refers to Bush as "the biggest spending President in 30 years.") Moreover, Barnes pointed out that President Bush had failed to exercise his veto power during his first term in office. (More than two years later, Bush still has not vetoed any spending bills.) Barnes even mentioned the President's alignment with Teddy Kennedy on education legislation and the expansion of Medicare entitlements.

Yet, back in 2003, none of this seemed to trouble Barnes or his fellow neoconservatives, who appeared just as comfortable with the President's big spending policies as they were with his decision to go to war with Iraq.

The *Economist* had a very different take on the President a few months later when it asked, on its cover, "Is George Bush a socialist?" The article compared Bush's spending policies to the "guns and butter" spending excesses of Lyndon B. Johnson's administration.

What was surprising at the time was how little outcry there was about all of this from the Beltway conservative establishment, even after Congress narrowly passed (at the President's insistence) a huge new Medicare entitlement. The Republican establishment made the case privately to conservative leaders that this was the price we had to pay to ensure George W. Bush's reelection in 2004.

Of course, there was a vigorous dissent to what was perceived as a "go along, get along" mentality on the part of mainstream conservatives. The dissent came from traditional conservatives and libertarians who recognized this bogus brand of conservatism for what it was—a watered-down version of big-government liberalism that would have made Nelson Rockefeller proud.

Until recently, Republicans in Washington didn't pay much attention to the critics of "big government conservatism." All of that has suddenly changed.

The Bush administration's decision to spend $200 billion in tax revenues that we don't have to fund the Katrina clean-up (without cutting federal spending elsewhere to help pay for the costs) has enraged fiscal conservatives who view this excessive spending as an all-too-obvious ploy to make amends for FEMA's abysmal response to the Katrina disaster. President Bush and Karl Rove may have taken their conservative base for granted one time too many.

The numbers are scary when you start adding up the spending excesses of this administration. We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars on the war in Iraq, with little to show for it. Congress recently passed, with the President's support, a $286.4 billion transportation bill stuffed with pork. Our annual budget

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deficits, already in excess of $500 billion, are on their way to $800 billion if current trends continue. A new entitlement benefit kicks in this January that the financially strapped Medicare system cannot afford and that will lead to massive new shortfalls in funding going forward. Our trade deficit is approaching $800 billion annually.

To put it bluntly, these guys in Washington are bankrupting our nation. If this is what "conservatism" has come to—*i.e.*, doing whatever it takes to get and maintain power—then I, for one, want no part of it. Finally, the grassroots conservatives are beginning to wake up and realize that they have been had by Bush, Rove, and the political hacks in Washington. Let's just hope that it is not too late for our country.

—*Thomas Pauken*

THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY is being attacked with an unconventional weapon: children's story books. As books promoting a pro-homosexual ideology have slipped into public elementary-school libraries across America, unsuspecting children as young as age four have been exposed to immoral themes and content.

Such was the case when the seven-year-old daughter of Michael and Tonya Hartsell brought home the book *King and King* from the library at Freeman Elementary School in Wilmington, North Carolina, last year. This book, written by Dutch authors Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland (Tricycle Press, 2002) is advertised for children as young as age six. The publisher's summary of the book states: "When the queen insists that the prince get married and take over as king, the search for a suitable mate does not turn out as expected." The true nature of this book lies in the fairy tale's conclusion—a "very special" wedding and the marriage of Prince Bertie and Prince Lee. The final page of the book illustrates the two princes kissing with a red heart covering their lips. A review of the book by *School Library Journal* admits, "The book does present same-sex marriage as a viable, acceptable way of life." After a shocked and dismayed Mr. and Mrs. Hartsell filed a complaint against the school for allowing their child to have access to such a book, a school committee ultimately voted to make the book accessible only to parents and teachers.

The controversy surrounding Mr. and Mrs. Hartsell's discovery brought my attention to an alarming situation in our public elementary schools. Currently, all across America, elementary schoolbooks are being purchased with little or no oversight and with only reactive policies in place to allow parental complaints. The choice of whether to expose such controversial topics as "gay marriage" to young children should be placed in the hands of parents, not librarians. Since books are often ordered *en masse* based on lists of award-winning books, vague publisher or catalog descriptions, or reviews offered by journals focusing on "literary merit" rather than content or moral appropriateness, it is no wonder offensive material has leaked into public elementary-school libraries.

To address this problem, I have introduced a bill in Congress entitled the Parental Empowerment Act of 2005 (H.R. 2295). The purpose of the legislation is to prohibit any state from receiving federal education funds unless the state has policies and procedures that require each local educational agency to maintain a parent review and empowerment council to provide input and recommendations regarding proposed acquisitions of materials for classrooms and libraries. Five of my colleagues in Congress are cosponsors of the resolution, and I anticipate that many more will join me.

The book *King and King* is not an anomaly in children's literature. There is a whole breed of books aimed at elementary-school readers that treat homosexuality as an accepted norm. The sequel to *King and King*, *King and King and Family* (2004), tells of the honeymoon newlyweds King Lee and King Bertie take to the jungle, where they adopt a young girl who stows away in their suitcase. *Lucy Goes to the Country* (Alyson Publications, 1998) shares with children the details of a weekend spent in the country by a homosexual couple and their cat. A review of the book by *Publishers Weekly* notes the book's "arch jokes aimed at adults," including an illustration where "one of the Big Guys makes eyes at a muscular fireman while his disgruntled partner looks on." *The Daddy Machine* (Alyson Publications, 2004) describes two children with lesbian mothers who pretend to invent a "daddy machine" because they wonder what it would be like to have a father. *The Sissy Duckling* (Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002) showcases jarring illustrations of homosexual stereotypes with its story of Elmer the duck: "Elmer is not like the other boy ducklings. While they like to build forts, he loves to bake cakes. While they like to play baseball, he wants to put on the halftime show. Elmer is a great big sissy."

It is a mistake to confuse the issue of informed decisionmaking, parental involvement, and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars with attempts at censorship and assaults on intellectual freedom. Parents who wish to teach their children traditional values such as the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman should not have to worry that certain schoolbooks will expose their children to controversial adult topics and lifestyles that conflict with those values.

Because the majority of people are unaware that these books exist in the public elementary-school libraries of America, it is vitally important to empower parents with a proactive system to screen highly objectionable materials. If we turn a blind eye and allow attacks on traditional family values to continue unabated, there will come a day when we long for the morality our nation fostered "once upon a time."

—*Rep. Walter B. Jones*

OBITER DICTA: Make plans now to attend The Rockford Institute's Ninth Annual **Summer School**, "The American Agrarian Tradition: From Jefferson to Wendell Berry," July 11-16, 2006, Rockford, Illinois. Full-time graduate and undergraduate students seeking scholarships, readers interested in supporting the Institute's scholarship fund, and anyone requiring more information should contact Rockford Institute vice president **Christopher Check** at (815) 964-5811.

Our poet this month is **David Middleton**. Dr. Middleton, the poet-in-residence at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana, is poetry editor for the *Classical Outlook* (University of Georgia) and the *Anglican Theological Review*. His books of verse include *The Burning Fields* (1991) and *Beyond the Chandeleurs* (1999), both from LSU Press.

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by Thomas Fleming

Agrarianism From Hesiod to Bradford

What does it mean to be an "agrarian"? In reading Southern literary journals, I get the impression that the "agrarians" were an isolated group of writers who, nostalgic for the preindustrial South, celebrated in prose and verse the bygone beauties of rustic life. In this sense, they were like the early Romantics, and their movement, if it can be called that, represented more a literary tendency than any coherent political or social vision. Such a description certainly fits some of the Nashville Agrarians, particularly in their later years, but it is at odds with the basic meaning of the word *agrarian*, and, before we can begin to assess agrarianism, we have to know what the word means and the long tradition that gives it meaning.

Sometimes, in trying to solve an American puzzle, it helps to go abroad. Over the years, I have been called upon to explain the Southern agrarian tradition to Europeans. In the lectures and interviews I have given, the first problem I face is the word *agrarian*. The subtitle of *I'll Take My Stand* is "Essays in the Agrarian Tradition." The phrase is Davidson's, but Ransom uses the term several times in his introductory statement of principles, where it seems to mean something like "pertaining to the life of the farm," as in the "agrarian life of the South." Ransom says that agrarianism is opposed to the industrial way of life and that it "does not stand in any particular need of definition." That is simply not true, and either Ransom and Davidson were ignorant of common English usage or else, as I think, pulling a fast one.

Agrarian, as anyone who survived first year Latin knows, comes from the Latin *ager*, meaning a field or land that is owned and cultivated, as opposed to *campus*, which also means field, in the sense of a level piece of unforested ground that is not under cultivation. The Latin adjective *agrarius*, then, was applied to anything having to do with the possession and management of cultivated land, but it acquired a very particular meaning in the period after the Punic Wars, when land-hungry veterans were demanding a share of the territory that had been conquered by the Roman republic. The Gracchus brothers who led this insurgency, which more than once turned violent, hoped to gain power and influence by passing agrarian laws, which were supposed to reduce the amount of public land that wealthy senators could own or lease or use and redistribute some of the surplus to the poor. This was neither the first nor the last time in history when the very rich would use the government to increase their wealth at the expense of poor and middling farmers. When Eisenhower's secretary of agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, told American farmers to "get big or get out," he did not have to exercise his prophetic powers to predict the result.

From this bit of history, it has developed that, even in English, *agrarian* has been used most often in the sense of agrarian reform laws that take land from the rich and give it to the poor, and that is the only sense in which the term is used in Italian and French. In fact, the earliest English uses noted in the OED have to do with agrarian legislation, and even the later, more general meaning—that pertaining to land and agriculture, cited from 19th-century writers—almost always refers to unrest and strife among the discontented rural poor. It is clear when we come to *agrarian* as a noun in English: An agrarian is one who favors a more equitable redistribution of farmland.

This is a very important fact, and one not likely to have been unknown to Donald Davidson and John Crowe Ransom and their colleagues, and it suggests that any true agrarian movement is as much a political and economic program as it is a romantic defense of rural life. Why the apparently sly twist of the word, if my interpretation is correct? It may well have been unconscious: A group of friends gets in the habit of using a word and eventually forgets where it came from.

On the other hand, we should remember the context. The core contributors of the book were predominantly conservatives who thought of themselves as classical liberals—that is, opposed to collectivism. Allen Tate, as is well known, did not like the title *I'll Take My Stand*, and he and Robert Penn Warren proposed *Tracts Against Communism*. Donald Davidson replied that it was a fine title, but perhaps the volume should then include something on the topic. Tate's alternative did have one virtue: It would show the world that the Twelve Southerners were not wild-eyed Bolsheviks eager to confiscate private property.

A few of them, at least, were agrarian in the traditional sense. In his essay in *Who Owns America?*, John Crowe Ransom was as explicit as Chesterton and Belloc in advocating a more widely diffused ownership of lands and business, and that is the real heart of agrarian political theory.

We Americans like to flatter ourselves that we have created a genuinely new world—"a new nation, conceived in liberty," a "city on a hill," and the home of the new "democratic man." This all, as the preacher would say, is vanity. America has contributed little to the world that we did not receive from our European ancestors. This is equally true of agrarianism. All the fundamental ideas of the Southern Agrarians go back to the ancient world, though sprinkled with the dust of Romanticism that projects the rather dangerous illusion that country people are more virtuous than city people. The ancients knew otherwise: Man is a social animal, and the desire to go live in the woods or on a solitary farm—the dream of Thoreau in *Walden*, for example—is perilous in the extreme. The old man of the woods, let us remember, is the Devil, who is forever luring us into the wilderness in order to tempt us.

Agrarianism has little to do with a romantic celebration of the traditions of rural life; it is, instead, a way of viewing the world and its problems from the very basic and earthy perspective of the farmer. The questions asked by agrarian writers from Hesiod to Mel Bradford include: What is the best sort of life that the gods or God has designed for man? What are the political, social, and economic institutions or policies that will help us to lead this life?

Life on American farms and plantations was a life lived in community, whether that community was formed by the planter, his family, and his people or by the church and hamlets around which smaller farms are inevitably clustered. This is the normal life for man, and the ancient Greeks, who preferred to live in cities and villages, were, for the most part,

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farmers who spent their working days out on their farms, even when this meant getting up well before first light to begin the long walk into the country.

To understand Greek agrarian attitudes, we must go back to basic texts, particularly to Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Near the beginning, the poet launches into a discourse on competition. There are two kinds of strife or emulation, he says: one that fosters war, and the other that stimulates even lazy and shiftless types to work hard, because the lazy man can see that, in his neighbor's case, hard work pays off. Hesiod is deeply suspicious of the rich and praises the life of the sturdy yeoman class. Hard work is good for a man, who might otherwise do enough work in a day to supply him for a year. In the end, he would give up working, and his farm would go to rack and ruin. But Zeus, to punish Prometheus through mankind, hid the secret of easy living.

Man might have lived forever in paradise if he had contented himself with being a farmer without technology. In fact, it is Prometheus, the patron saint of technology, who fashions the woman that is man's undoing. This is the first Western attempt at drawing up a theodicy, and it explains why work, specifically farm work, is both a punishment and the only way of life proper to man.

Eight centuries later, the Roman poet Vergil, himself a dispossessed farmer, picked up where Hesiod left off, explaining the necessity of work and advancing the Augustan agenda of increasing the class of independent farmers. In the *Georgics*, Vergil tried to revive the ideal of the sturdy yeoman, but his poem, as beautiful as its descriptions of rural life (with all its harshness) are, has a philosophical and political purpose. Anticipating Ovid's *amor omnia vincit*, Vergil says it is *improbus labor* that conquers all. Civilization is like man rowing laboriously upstream: Slack off for a moment on the oars, and you will be swept back downstream.

Time passes. The empire rises and falls; the Christian Age rises and decays into the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The settlers of the English colonies in North America, however, return to a way of life more like the 12th century or the early Roman republic. On the eve of the Revolution, Americans typically lived together in family settlements of two to three generations; they tended to be rather religious; most importantly, they had arrived in the New World not so much to change their mode of life as to acquire new lands. Before industrialization, the United States as a whole was a nation of reactionary farmers who had rebelled against the king with the intention of restoring what they thought was the old English constitution and in order to remain in possession of the traditional and chartered privileges of the colonies of Massachusetts, Virginia, and Carolina.

After the Revolution, the Northeast became, little by little, a commercial and industrial society. Nevertheless, the people of the South and West conserved their agricultural character. The struggle between these two sectional interests—the one, commercial; the other, agricultural—defines, in part, American politics up to the present, and it was this conflict that was the principal cause of the War Between the States.

During the presidency of George Washington, this political division split the Cabinet in two. Alexander Hamilton upheld the interests of the bankers and businessmen of the Northeast, while Thomas Jefferson made himself the spokesman for the farmers, artisans, and shopkeepers of the entire country. Jefferson insisted that the people of America—in particular, the small to middling farmers—were in a position to look after their own interests without the kind attention of the national government, and the presidential election of 1800 has been seen as a second American revolution.

Jefferson dedicated a large part of his only published book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, to questions of farming. Jefferson also kept diaries on his gardens and farms. One year after drafting the Declaration of Independence, he was recording the peas and spinach he planted, the number of blankets distributed to his slaves (he called them, collectively, his "family"). According to Jefferson and his followers, agriculture is both the best means of gaining a living and the only secure foundation of a republic. In a letter to John Jay, he wrote:

> Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds. I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else.

Jefferson saw that the growth of population and expansion of manufacturing would change the situation, but, he added, he would prefer to send farmhands to sea than to turn them into industrial workers: "I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned."

According to Jefferson, republican liberty depends on independent farmers who would defend their own land. This conviction was shared by his follower, John Taylor. It was no accident, Taylor explained in *Arator*, that the divine intelligence chose the agricultural condition as the human paradise. The farmer's life is peaceful and honest, he writes, but military imperialism not only despoils the conquered but also imposes

> a permanent system of heavy taxation than which nothing can more vitally wound or kill the pleasures of agriculture; and to pillage or steal under the sanction of the statute books is no less fatal to the happiness of agriculture than the pretended sanction of God, or the feudal tyranny over the body, under the equally fraudulent pretence of defending the nation.

Taylor deplored the money culture established by bankers and financiers who sucked up the farmers' surpluses and drove the farmers themselves into a suicidal pursuit of bigger and easier profits. This encouraged them in a reckless disregard for improving the soil and establishing a stable civilization. Farmers were forced, as Andrew Lytle would later put it, to live off of the topsoil. While this tendency is aggravated by the system of money and debt, Taylor also understands that wanderlust is the original sin of our American character. He cites what he calls "the terrible facts" that are responsible for the exhausted condition of agriculture: "that the strongest chord which vibrates on the heart of man, cannot tie our people to the natal spot, that they view it with horror, and flee from it to new climes with joy."

The Southern Agrarians owed a great deal to Taylor. He anticipated John Crowe Ransom's condemnation of mobility in *I'll Take My Stand*, and both Andrew Lytle and M.E. Bradford, who edited *Arator*, learned much of their own political wisdom from Taylor. As varied as Taylor's political struggles were, Bradford glimpsed the thread: a relentless opposition to the centralization of power in

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the hands of Washington politicians, to the centralization of wealth in the hands of Northeastern bankers, and to the centralization of force in the hands of a nationally controlled army.

The progressive deterioration of the soils, caused in part by an exploitative economic system, was partly to blame for the westward migration that destabilized American social and cultural life. In the antebellum South, however, many planters did take a serious interest in improving the condition of the soil. Edmund Ruffin, a Virginia planter, gained a reputation as an agronomist from his success in renewing exhausted lands in the James River valley. In 1843, James Henry Hammond, governor of South Carolina, invited Ruffin to take a survey of South Carolina's failing agriculture. The two men, though quite different in many ways, adhered to the agrarian political program of Jefferson and Taylor.

Ruffin was not simply a technician concerned only with the economic aspects of farming. He also feared that the states of the agricultural South were losing their economic as well as their political independence. He returned to South Carolina at the end of 1860 and accepted the invitation to fire the first shot in the War for Southern Independence. The war was about many things—tariffs, freight rates, the expansion of slavery, the conflict between Yankee and Southern pride, a cultural clash between Unitarian Deists and Trinitarian Christians—but it was most obviously a war between a Jeffersonian view of a republic based on land and the Hamiltonian desire, shared by much of the Northern leadership, to create a centralized state that would enrich the bankers, merchants, and manufacturers. In the end, when the war was lost, Ruffin fired another fatal shot—one that took his life. It is a terrifying image of the South's failure that he chose the path of the pagan Cato the Younger rather than accept the martyrdom of living under the rule of men he despised.

The victory of the Northeast signaled the triumph of capitalism over the rural South, Midwest, and West. It also introduced political corruption on an unprecedented scale and an exploitation of both rural and industrial labor that led inevitably to class struggle and socialism. It is against this Scylla and Charybdis of hedonistic capitalism and collectivist socialism that the Nashville Agrarians wanted to warn their neighbors.

Americans today are caught between two false principles about property. If we emphasize the rights of ownership, the result is some form of capitalism that destroys citizenship and invites both revolution and dictatorship, but, if we emphasize redistribution of land through agrarian laws, in contempt of private property, the result is a Marxist state that enslaves all the people for the benefit of a party bureaucracy. And between those two poles—exploitative capitalism and oppressive Marxism—most political business in the world is carried on, with never a glance at the agrarian principle that is the only viable third way.

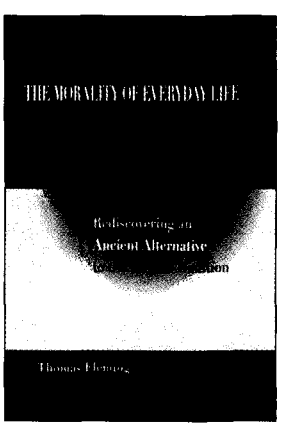
If the agrarians from Hesiod to Bradford were right, then a free people must be predominantly a farming people—or, at least, in more abstract economic terms, a people who own the means of production, as the master carpenter owns his tools. If they were wrong, then where are the exceptions in history of an urban race of consumers who preserved their virtue and their independence? The histories of Athens and Venice, England and New England, are not encouraging. If they are right, then none of the programs being proposed to restore economic or social health to these United States, from the Flat Tax to a Human Life Amendment, will amount to a hill of beans. c

The Morality of Everyday Life:
Rediscovering an Ancient Alternative to the Liberal Tradition

by Thomas Fleming

What passes for conservatism today is really nothing more than the impossible moral and social theories of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in which universal abstractions, such as democracy and equality, are presented as hard truths, when, in fact, they have never existed in any society in human history. Nonetheless, they are to be applied worldwide, at the tip of a spear (or cruise missile) if necessary.

Dr. Fleming's alternative is rooted in "everyday life," the local realities of blood and soil, custom and tradition, friendship and faith, and in the wisdom born of the experiences these realities beget. This wisdom finds expression in folktales and fables, in ancient Hebrew Scriptures and Greek philosophy, and in medieval casuistry. It is the method to solving ethical problems great and small, and it is the method that undergirds authentic conservatism.



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by Philip Jenkins

No Mirror Image

Watching the horrible images of the recent bomb attacks in London, Americans might be forgiven for feeling a sense of alarm, especially when the terrorism was directly linked to homegrown suicide bombers. The thought of American extremists adopting similar tactics on our soil is extremely worrying, though few media outlets dared to explore the prospect in too much detail: Nobody wants to face charges of ethnic stereotyping. In the *New York Times*, Nina Bernstein obliquely dealt with the issue under the comforting headline "In American Cities, No Mirror Image of Muslims of Leeds" (July 21). According to her article, we would only face real dangers if we as a society were to blame all Muslims for the crimes of a few and to overreact by passing discriminatory immigration laws.

I am happy to echo this conclusion. In fact, I would like to point out several critical ways in which the British situation differs utterly from ours and, in fact, has for some years been so perilous that no one should really have missed the warning signs. Let me list some of the key differences between our societies.

The most obvious issue is one of population. Britain has a sizable Muslim population, some 1.6 million strong, and even if extremist propaganda influences only a tiny fraction of that group, that would still indicate a potential terrorist milieu running into the tens of thousands. In contrast, the United States has as few as four million or so Muslims.

Again, Britain has a major and well-known network of extremists and terror apologists. These include some buffoonish figures connected with a few notorious mosques, but far more lethal are the discreet networks concealed behind Muslim charities and pressure groups, which present themselves as the voice of a deprived community. So outrageous has Islamic activism become that even the highly liberal British government is now compiling a master list of extremists, based on their inflammatory preaching or support of jihadist websites. Such militant groups work hand in hand with stunningly gullible non-Muslims, who accept them as a legitimate part of a progressive coalition. They leap into action every time the security services detain a Muslim suspect, demanding proof of criminal behavior that would hold up according to the most stringent legal criteria. In reality, such definitive proof only becomes available once the suspect in question has detonated himself on a subway train. The United States, thankfully, has no such extremists and is home to no such covert networks. Nor are American liberals so foolish as to criticize each and every investigation of subversive networks on our soil.

Britain, also, is at last confronting the previously taboo subject of extremist networks in its universities and colleges. Because student status gives instant access to watertight identity papers, militants arriving in the West have long been instructed to register at local colleges. Moreover, Islamic associations and societies on campus are notorious recruiting grounds for militants, who often target rich or middle-class students of lukewarm religious sentiments. And concerns about academic freedom and free speech mean that university authorities are very reluctant to investigate such clandestine activity. A recent report stressed the role of student societies in persuading "people to move from a situation where they may be angry young men and women to being prepared to kill other people and themselves." "They need to be inspired and encouraged that this is the right thing to do," and the societies "provide links to those which do that inspiring and encouraging, and university authorities have not the first idea what's going on in student societies" (*Guardian*, July 19). Amazingly, things might be about to change, to the point of introducing much closer oversight of extremist student groups. Americans can only look with bafflement at a situation in which universities so abdicate their responsibilities as to tolerate groups using a campus to campaign and organize for violence, or even to permit faculty to undertake pro-terrorist propaganda.

One feature of Islamic terror in Great Britain is extremely worrying: the recruitment of militants from other than Arab or Middle Eastern stock. Would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid is of Caribbean origin, as was the late and unlamented Jermaine Lindsay, one of last July's subway terrorists. France also records a significant number of white converts to the most extreme forms of Islamic activism. Such individuals are so dangerous, partly, because they disarm the suspicions that would immediately attach to a person of Middle Eastern origin acting suspiciously in a public place. The use of black terrorists poses a double danger, in that a suicide campaign would inevitably increase black-white tensions, as police targeted blacks for special scrutiny or search.

Muslim terrorists have a unique opportunity to recruit black members because of their strong presence in British prisons, through their tight control over the position of prison chaplains or imams. Once recruited, militant inmates form groups in which religious and political propaganda become indistinguishable, preparing them for the day on which they will be released to undertake holy war in British cities. The French today describe their penal institutions as Universities of Jihad. Here again, Americans should take comfort. African-Americans have no acquaintance whatever with Islam in any form, nor are our prisons so idiotic as to entrust the pastoral care of Muslim inmates to extremist imams of Wahhabi disposition.

Finally, Britain has often been engaged in conflicts with Muslim or Middle Eastern nations or terrorist movements. Such enemies might well be expected to strike back using local talent who could easily operate on native soil, without encountering difficulties from immigration authorities. In contrast, the United States eschews all foreign entanglements.

In so many ways, therefore, we see why the United States faces no prospect of domestic subversion by Islamic groups, nor could American Muslim extremists ever turn to suicide bombing. We are not a mirror image of Great Britain.

And I'm Queen Marie of Rumania. c

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The Old South, the New South, and the Real South

by Tom Landess

In April 1968, the University of Dallas Literature Department hosted an Agrarian reunion. We invited John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, Andrew Lytle, and Donald Davidson to come together in several private sessions to discuss the history and meaning of *I'll Take My Stand*. Ransom, Warren, Tate, and Lytle accepted. Davidson was too ill to attend. Less than two weeks after the reunion, he was dead.

Lytle and Davidson were still Agrarians. Ransom, Warren, and Tate were not. So we expected heated confrontations. Unfortunately, no one wanted to fight. They were like long-lost cousins at a family reunion—affectionate, overly polite, and reluctant to renew old quarrels, particularly with the tape recorder wheeling on the table in front of them. The two best passages in the transcript had nothing to do with Agrarians. One was Warren's story of how Gov. Huey Long, in a ride around the square in Baton Rouge, proposed that he and Cleanth Brooks create and edit the *Southern Review*. The other was Ransom's account of the misadventures of a foot fetishist at Kenyon College. The rest of the tape was not worth transcribing.

This proved to be a lost opportunity. Warren came to Dallas having thought about *I'll Take My Stand* in terms that were far more original and broad-ranging than anything discussed in our two-day colloquy. While the others were attending a cocktail party, I met his plane at Love Field. As we drove to the motel, he said something that put the Agrarians' view of the South in a new perspective. "The overarching question of our time," he said, "is whether the modern tendency to think abstractly is a good or a bad thing. That's a question I'd like for us to discuss." Unfortunately, the conversation never moved in that direction.

In retrospect, I believe the role of abstraction in the creation of Southern history is a good place to start in evaluating the Agrarians. In one sense, *I'll Take My Stand* was a reaction against an ideology called Industrialism, which, like alchemy, promised to transform a base economy into gold. The attacks on *I'll Take My Stand* were, from the very beginning, grounded in an abstraction—a polemical paradigm that had beguiled Southerners and Northerners alike since the War and Reconstruction—that of the "New South." The New South was a construct designed to supplant the "Old South" and posited a theoretical salvation waiting just around the corner, just over the next hill. In creating this concept, visionaries attempted to transcend a controversial past and a demeaning present by inventing a utopian future.

The most famous 19th-century use of the phrase was by Henry Grady in an 1886 speech before the New England Society of New York. Full of jokes and anecdotes, the speech nonetheless had at its heart a juxtaposition of those two compelling ideas—the Old South and the New South. As Grady put it:

> The Old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The New South presents a perfect democracy, oligarchs leading in the popular movement—a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface but stronger at the core—a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty homes for every palace, and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age.

Both the Old South and New South were abstractions created by Grady's manipulative mind to win the approval of his audience. They were, first and foremost, simplistic ways of looking at reality, an attempt to reduce the South to a few manageable elements, then destroy and rebuild it.

The Old South—the one that "rested everything on slavery and agriculture"—was familiar to the New Englanders whom Grady was addressing. They created it, and they believed in it as surely as they believed the Pilgrims invented Thanksgiving. They also hated it.

The Old South was populated exclusively by two-dimensional plantation owners who owned hundreds of two-dimensional slaves and treated them with a cruelty unmatched in history. The plantations were concentration camps where slaves were often beaten to death for minor infractions of draconian rules. At the same time, white masters and their sons raped black women at will and fathered illegitimate sons and daughters, who also became their slaves.

The world this institution produced was frivolous and self-indulgent. While the men were whipping and raping, the women were preoccupied with the latest Parisian styles, with fancy-dress balls, and with young, arrogant fops. The Old South produced no serious literature or music and few educated men. It was a society sustained by the sweat of black brows, and for that reason alone it deserved the destruction that the War and Reconstruction brought.

The reality was far more complex. Before the War, the overwhelming majority of Southerners lived on small farms—no more than a few hundred acres. Typically, family members worked the land together, grew their own food, and bartered for the relatively small amount of manufactured goods they needed. After the War, the number of Southerners living on these subsistence farms increased. In virtually all respects, they were no different from farmers in rural areas of the Northeast, the Midwest, and the Southwest, as the Agrarians often pointed out.

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But you will not find small farmers in the "Old South." In a coach-and-four, you could drive around the countryside, blanketed by abstract magnolias and stereotypical cotton, and see nothing but sadistic plantation owners, spoiled women, and oppressed slaves.

The New South was the theoretical antithesis of the Old South. In Henry Grady's time, it meant, among other things, the fall of the wicked plantation and the rise of the beneficent factory. New Englanders were appalled at the cruelties perpetrated by two-dimensional white slaveowners, while they showed little concern for their own treatment of their workers, which led to the rise of the American labor movement. The thought of the Old South increasingly troubled them. They longed to feel good about themselves and about the country they had founded at Plymouth Rock. But the abstraction they had created haunted their dreams. The idea of a New South—"a perfect democracy"—was a necessary therapy. That is why Grady's highly decorative oratory struck such a responsive chord. Did Grady understand New Englanders' passion for intellectual polarities and pander to it? Surely he did.

> We have found out that in the general summary the free Negro counts more than he did as a slave. We have planted the schoolhouse on the hilltop and made it free to white and black. We have sowed towns and cities in the place of theories and put business above politics. [Applause.] We have challenged your spinners in Massachusetts and your iron-makers in Pennsylvania. We have learned that the $400,000,000 annually received from our cotton crop will make us rich, when the supplies that make it are home-raised. We have reduced the commercial rate of interest from twenty-four to six per cent, and are floating four per cent bonds. We have learned that one Northern immigrant is worth fifty foreigners, and have smoothed the path to southward, wiped out the place where Mason and Dixon's line used to be, and hung our latch-string out to you and yours.

Thus Grady laid out his pie-in-the-sky blueprint for the New South. Its schools would be integrated, despite the fact that New England schoolmarms had come South and immediately segregated the integrated schools that existed on some plantations. Unlike the North, it would be racially egalitarian. It would go into business and leave politics to the Yankees. It would build industries to rival those in the Northeast. At first glance, this last might seem threatening; Grady's audience, however, would have known that the new textile mills in Georgia and the Carolinas were owned and operated by Yankees, as were the steel mills in Alabama. Besides, Industrialism knew no limitations in the creation of wealth.

The New South, then, was really the Old North, the region New Englanders, in their satisfaction, believed they had always inhabited. The New South would surrender its identity, erase the Mason-Dixon Line, and attract hoards of Yankees to capitalize and run its industries. Southerners would become Americans for the first time in history. Grady does not say that an industrialized New South would also become protectionist and learn to love tariffs, but he did not have to say it—not to that crowd.

By the time the Agrarians came along, the New South had become a full-blown ideology, promoted at Vanderbilt by Chancellor James Kirkland and English Department chairman Edwin Mims. To Kirkland and Mims, the New South was a futuristic vision in which Atlanta, Nashville, and Birmingham would become industrial giants like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit, their stacks emitting fire and smoke, as prophetic as the Delphic oracle. The region would become New England. Southerners would be abstractly rich and abstractly happy.

Melanie Anderson

John Crowe Ransom—at that time, the intellectual leader of the group—defined the problem in *I'll Take My Stand*. In a discussion of Humanism, he makes it quite clear that the Agrarians believed they were opposing abstractionism:

> The "Humanists" are too abstract. Humanism, properly speaking, is not an abstract system, but a culture, the whole way in which we live, act, think, and feel. It is a kind of imaginatively balanced life lived out in a definite social tradition. And, in the concrete, we believe that this, the genuine humanism, was rooted in the agrarian life of the older South and of other parts of the country that shared in such a tradition. It was not an abstract moral "check" derived from the classics—it was not soft material poured in from the top. It was deeply founded in the way of life itself—in its tables, chairs, portraits, festivals, laws, marriage customs. We cannot recover our native humanism by adopting some standard of taste that is critical enough to question the contemporary arts but not critical enough to question the social and economic life which is their ground.

He was talking here about the "New Humanism" extolled in the writings of Irving Babbitt, who suggested that the soul of America could be saved by philosophy and literature. Ransom made it clear in this passage that the Agrarians' South was a region of concrete particulars. He names them: tables, chairs, portraits, festivals, laws, marriage customs—a South the Agrarians knew from firsthand experience.

All had lived in small towns where agriculture was the chief economic enterprise. They understood the sparse pleasures and quiet virtues of such communities. It was these things they wanted to maintain, not the mere act of hoeing and weeding, though such labor lay at the heart of the South they wanted to preserve.

In *I'll Take My Stand*, they specifically rejected the paradigm of the Old South with its legions of slaves and its great

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manor houses. The Southerners they admired were the small subsistence farmers—modest in their aspirations, independent of mind, self-sufficient. These constituted economic units left out of the theoretical equations of both communists and Yankee capitalists. As Andrew Lytle put it in his essay, these plain people lived with dignity and imagination off "the hind tit." That South was no abstraction. It actually existed in 1930. The Agrarians could look out of their windows and see it.

However, instead of accepting the Agrarians as advocating the conservation of this real and modest world, critics North and South accused them of defending the Old South and proceeded to denounce *I'll Take My Stand* as bigoted and Luddite, quixotically standing in the way of industrial progress, which was even then roaring down the highway like the 9:28 bus to New York City.

Such attacks, highly successful even among Southerners, soon relegated *I'll Take My Stand* to the backwaters of the historical debate over the causes of the War and its aftermath. Their highly accurate version of the South 1900-1930 was buried beneath an unscalable mountain of false rhetoric. Today, it takes a hardworking scholar and a sturdy spade to dig it up.

Meanwhile, the Old South and the New South live on in the popular imagination. Indeed, current attacks on the Old South have reached an intensity no one could have predicted in 1930. Paradoxically, this astonishing burst of malice is the result of a new era of racial harmony in the region. Organizations such as the NAACP and the Southern Poverty Law Center have perennially raised money for anti-Southern activities. In recent years, however, it has become harder and harder to find racist activities in the South. Consider the following facts. A few years ago, the Gallup organization ran a poll on race relations nationwide. The South was the only region where a majority (53 percent) of blacks said they were treated equally.

The press is constantly reporting that a large proportion of white Southerners (some say a majority) attend segregated academies. In fact, Southern attendance at private schools is usually somewhat below the national average, even in Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina. A recent Harvard study reported that the South was the only region where a majority of white children attended integrated schools.

An even more recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau pointed out that the South was the only region where more blacks were moving in than moving out. The ratio was about two-to-one.

Given these depressingly positive trends, the NAACP and other activist groups have begun to attack the symbols of the Confederacy, which they have successfully transformed from quaint evocations of the Lost Cause into harsh reminders of slavery and racism. Adversaries of the Old South are particularly hard on the Battle Flag, in part because it was used by the racist rabble in the fight against segregation in the 50's and 60's. Ironically, when the rabble flew the flag at Klan rallies, they were affirming the New Englanders' interpretation of their region's history, a point of view that Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stonewall Jackson would have found repugnant.

Speaking of Lee, he, too, has been turned into cardboard. He opposed slavery as surely as did Harriet Beecher Stowe, writing in 1856 that "There are few, I believe, in this enlightened age, who will not acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil." Yet he is now depicted as chief defender of that institution, wearing a black cape, twirling a black mustache, and tying golden-haired Freedom to the railroad track. His portrait, displayed along the Canal Walk in Richmond, was recently removed by the city fathers, restored, and then burned up by some anonymous Yankee of the spirit.

Likewise, the playing of "Dixie" is now equated with the singing of the "Horst Wessel Song." In Germany, the latter is against the law. In First Amendment America, the former might as well be. Yet the song—written by a Northerner for performance in a Northern invention called a minstrel show—does nothing more than express nostalgia for a region known for its buckwheat cakes and Injun batter.

Schools and streets named for Confederate generals have been renamed. Marble-eyed statues of Confederate soldiers have been removed from public squares. Angry neo-Puritans have even demanded that Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his wife be exhumed from graves in a Memphis public park and reburied on private property far from the hypersensitive eyes of out-of-state tourists.

To be sure, this hatred of the Old South was intensified by 50 to 60 years of legalized segregation in the region. Northern states had such laws as well. The *Board of Education*—as in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*—governed schools in Kansas, which entered the Union as a free state. Still, Southern states were by far the chief offenders, and the Supreme Court ruling affected them disproportionately.

However, it was not Old South defenders who produced Jim Crow. It was the small farmers and industrial workers of Henry Grady's New South—those who hated and envied plantation owners and inhabited 100 farms for every plantation, 50 homes for every palace. The apostles of New South segregation—men such as Tom Watson of Georgia, James Vardaman of Mississippi, and Pitchfork Ben Tillman of South Carolina—overthrew the landed gentry (many of them former slaveowners) and promptly consigned blacks to a discrete and inferior world. Under this upstart leadership, most Jim Crow laws were passed—between 1895-1905, by the way, and not immediately after Reconstruction, as many have erroneously assumed.

History is sometimes too complex for historians to grasp.

In any era, the real South is infinitely more complicated than either the Old South or the New South—just as flesh-and-blood blacks are more complicated than Mr. Tam and Mr. Bones. The Agrarians attempted to counter two abstractions with a concrete reality and, in so doing, discovered that most people—North and South—prefer the abstractions, which simplify life and give it the illusion of easily attainable meaning.

On the other hand, for 75 years, *I'll Take My Stand* has maintained its purchase on the imagination of a saving remnant; and it has never been out of print, a statement untrue of many earlier polemical works. (H.C. Nixon was a contributor to the Agrarian symposium who later changed his mind and wrote *Forty Acres and Steel Mules*. Try getting a copy at Barnes and Noble.)

Napoleon said that "history is the agreed-upon lie." At present, it appears as if he was right. However, life has a way of overflowing even the deepest bowl. The historic South may yet overcome all abstractions, however well dressed. It would take only one bright latter-day Agrarian to wipe out the abstractions and redeem the past. At present, I could name at least a dozen good scholars who could make that happen. C

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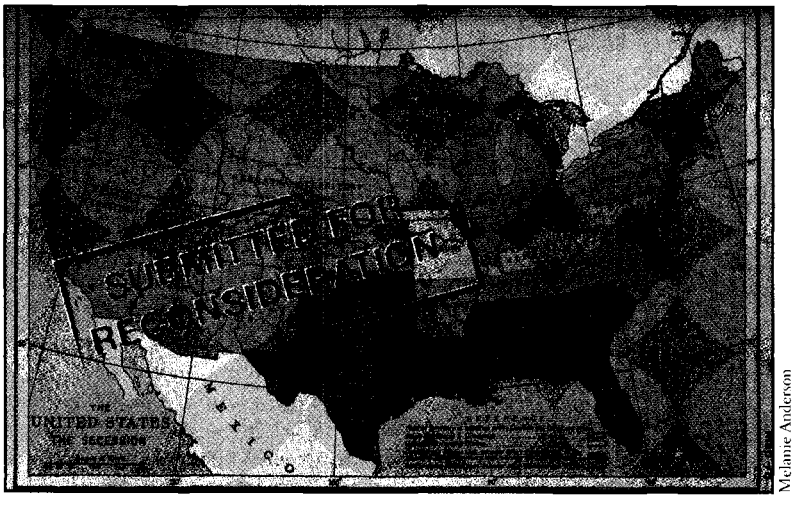
Reattacking Leviathan

Starving the Beast

by Mark Royden Winchell



Melanie Anderson

In 1989, Russell Kirk recalled browsing through the library at Michigan State College as an "earnest sophomore" over 50 years earlier. It was there that he happened upon Donald Davidson's *The Attack on Leviathan*. "It was written eloquently," Kirk notes, "and for me it made coherent the misgivings I had felt concerning the political notions popular in the 1930s. The book was so good that I assumed all intelligent Americans, or almost all, were reading it." As Kirk would later learn, nothing could have been further from the truth. When it sold fewer than 600 copies in the 11 years after its publication, the University of North Carolina Press pulped the remaining unbound copies of the book and allowed it to go out of print.

Though *The Attack on Leviathan* was widely ignored at the time of its first printing, it has been reprinted at least twice (most recently by Transaction Press in 1991 as part of Kirk's own series, the Library of Conservative Thought) and seems more pertinent today than it did at the height (or depth) of the New Deal. Consisting mostly of essays previously published in the *American Review*, Davidson's book is subtitled *Regionalism and Nationalism in American Life*. Although regionalism has been one of the defining tenets of agrarian thought since ancient times, none of Davidson's fellow contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* emphasized the concept as much as he did.

If anything, their desire to restore the agricultural economy of the South led several of the Nashville Agrarians to look to the federal government for deliverance. Herman Clarence Nixon was a lifelong proponent of the New Deal, while John Crowe Ransom and Lyle Lanier did not believe that the Roosevelt administration had gone far enough in championing the small farmer against the captains of industry. In contrast, Davidson expressed early skepticism concerning policies that simply transferred control of a centralized economy from private industrialists to government bureaucrats. Not only did he believe in limited government, he regarded the United States herself as more of a domestic empire than a legitimate nation.

Although not as well known as his pronouncements about the frontier, Frederick Jackson Turner's theory of sectionalism seemed to give scholarly validity to much of what Davidson instinctively knew to be true. Sectionalism has become so pronounced in the United States for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the sheer size of the country. As Turner points out, the distance between Charleston, South Carolina, and the West Coast is comparable to the distance between Constantinople and the west coast of Spain. Similarly, the distance between our northern and southern borders is comparable to the distance between the Baltic coast and the island of Sicily. Add to this the cultural diversity of our people, and it is difficult to think of America as a nation in the same sense that France and England are nations.

Because Davidson's native South had economic and cultural interests but insufficient political power, it had been perpetually exploited by the industrial Northeast. Were the two regions not part of a larger political entity called the "United States," the situation Davidson describes might well be labeled colonialism. Sociologists such as Howard Odum of the University of North Carolina demonstrated the enormity of the situation. "You cannot accuse a page of statistics of being nostalgic," Davidson writes in *The Attack on Leviathan*. "There is no Javeh-worship in a chart of taxation figures. It is impossible to charge Mr. Odum with renewing the War Between the States when he points out that the per capita farm income for New York state in 1929 was $493, while in Tennessee it was

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Mark Royden Winchell's next book, Reinventing the South: Versions of a Literary Region, *will be published by the University of Missouri Press in January.*

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$137."

If the Agrarians were philosophically committed to a devolution of economic power, their identity as Southerners added a pragmatic urgency to such a position. During antebellum times, the political representatives of the North continually raised the tariff to oppressive levels. This increased the price of industrial goods purchased by the Southern farmer, while inviting international retaliation against the agricultural exports of the South. As Thomas J. DiLorenzo and other economic historians have shown, Lincoln was less concerned by slavery in the South than by the prospect of free-trade ports cropping up in an independent Confederacy. The economic imbalance between the regions was only exacerbated during Reconstruction and its long aftermath.

Although the federal government has proved itself able and willing to invade its own provinces to enforce its will, the preferred method of control is financial. Federal "aid" means federal control of everything from educational policy to speed limits on the highway. The only way to slay the beast is to starve it.

Both public and private forces were creating the sort of centralized economy envisioned by Alexander Hamilton. The Agrarians, however, believed that the good society is one in which private property is widely distributed. They agreed with Marx that the centralization that came with industrial capitalism was a necessary and inevitable prelude to communism. This alone was sufficient reason for opposing industrialism. Like their Distributist brethren in England, the Agrarians wanted to return to a pre-capitalist society of self-supporting farmers, laborers, and small businessmen. A situation in which everyone had his own small but personal stake in the economy seemed a formula for social stability.

Although Davidson was initially a cautious supporter of the New Deal, he soon became convinced that Roosevelt's attempts to forge a national political coalition would leave the interests of the South ill served. (Andrew Lytle's image of the hind tit comes to mind.) In "The Dilemma of the Southern Liberals" (Chapter 13 of *The Attack on Leviathan*), Davidson argues that the liberal movement in the South had gradually abandoned its agrarian Jeffersonian roots to become an alien ideology. When he published the original version of this essay in the *American Mercury*, he still regarded liberalism as an honorable philosophy, even if those who professed it were taking positions with which he disagreed.

One can claim that modern liberalism was perpetuating the theoretical legacy of Jefferson while abstracting that legacy from its specific historical and social context. When Jefferson praises liberty for the common man, Davidson argues, he has a particular kind of common man and a particular kind of society in mind—"some Tom Jones of Virginia or Tennessee, a responsible individual with the stuff of God in him. Jeffersonian liberalism proposed to give Tom Jones his fair chance with the 'rich and well-born' on whom Hamilton wished to confer power." Although it is proper to defend a kind of metaphysical equality of persons within such a society, it would be foolhardy to destroy the society itself in order to enforce an unnatural equality of condition. That is why John C. Calhoun could claim the Jeffersonian mantle while defending slavery and opposing the tyranny of majorities.

Jefferson, of course, is a kind of national Rorschach test in which we see our own perceptions reflected and magnified. While Southerners such as Calhoun saw the Jefferson who advocated states' rights and a limited federal government, their Northern counterparts seized on the egalitarian aspects of Jefferson's rhetoric, while remembering his willingness to use the powers of the presidency to achieve his desired political ends. As a result, Davidson sees the War Between the States as "a struggle between two kinds of [Jeffersonian] liberalism."

Despite his criticism of the direction he saw modern liberalism taking, Davidson tries to convey the impression that he is writing from within the tradition rather than outside of it. Nowhere does he propose a systematic conservative position with which to replace liberalism. (When the word *conservative* is used at all, it is as an adjective rather than a noun.) What he finally endorses is a recovery of what he takes to be the original Jeffersonian position—liberalism, properly understood. Davidson urges Southern liberals to break their ties with industrial capitalism, which he assumes is doomed anyway, and once again unite their intelligence with the sentiments of patriotic Southerners. "The Southern liberals, in short, may escape their dilemma by becoming more Southern."

Given Davidson's negligible political influence during his own time and his continuing lack of a national audience, one is tempted to see him as a kind of regional curiosity. Of all the Agrarians, however, he may have held the views most relevant to our present age. If the 19th century was the great era of nationalism and the 20th century, an epoch of totalitarianism, the 21st century may well be a time of devolution.

The fall of the Soviet Empire and the rise of separatist movements around the world suggest that centralization can only go so far before a kind of natural implosion occurs. It is interesting to note how many recent insurgencies fly the Confederate Battle Flag along with their own national banners. What is regarded as a symbol of political incorrectness in our supposedly indivisible nation is an emblem of freedom in much of the rest of the world.

If America in the 1930's struck Davidson as a Leviathan, that description is immeasurably truer today. In 1651, Thomas Hobbes used this term, originally the Hebrew name given to the sea monster of the Old Testament, to refer to the all-powerful civil state. Unlike those on the nationalist right (fascists in his time and neoconservatives in ours), Davidson distrusted

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the Leviathan most when it seemed most benign. (Like Hamlet's devil, this monster has the power to assume a pleasing shape.) That is why he was more interested in attacking it than in teaching it to eat grits or speak with a Southern drawl.

If Davidson could still consider himself a liberal, that term has now been too corrupted to remain available to lovers of individual liberty. But *conservatism* is not much better. The central government continues to grow whether it is Democrats or Republicans (or, as with the USA PATRIOT Act, an occasional bipartisan consensus) who manipulate the levers of government. Is it any wonder that a majority of Americans do not vote, while those who do seem so evenly divided? A Davidsonian vision of the good society would be one in which power was returned to the American people in their individual communities. Davidson's student M.E. Bradford and other political philosophers referred to this as the concept of corporate liberty.

All sane people realize that the highest form of human liberty does not and cannot exist in nature. It can exist only in communities united by what Saint Augustine called "loved things held in common." Such communities must be strong enough to preserve their common values and deferential enough to leave people alone in matters not essential to their common well-being. The freer such communities are to flourish, the likelier it is for individual citizens to discover where and how they want to live. In crushing the natural diversity of community life, national uniformity inevitably crushes liberty.

No doubt, much of the historic resistance to the concept of devolution and regional autonomy was because of its entanglement with the issue of race. (Davidson dissipated much of his own intellectual and emotional energy in a quixotic defense of segregation.) Now that Jim Crow is a distant memory, however, we may be able to take a more objective view of the virtues of decentralization. In fact, in Davidson's own lifetime, some black radicals were beginning to see the advantages of something they called "community control." (In an entry in his diary dated June 10, 1963, Davidson writes approvingly of Malcolm X and his desire for a separate "Negro state.") All that is needed is a practical agenda for restoring corporate liberty in the context of American federalism.

If the federal judiciary has done much to stifle state sovereignty, the proper response is not to propose separate constitutional amendments to reverse individual decisions—no matter how objectionable. As Raoul Berger has demonstrated in his book *Government by Judiciary* (1977), such decisions can generally be traced to an expansive interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The doctrine of incorporation (most vigorously expounded by Justice Hugo Black) uses the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights as a pretext to dictate social policy in the individual states.

This is, of course, a complete reversal of the intentions of those who drafted and ratified the Bill of Rights. The restrictions enumerated in these first ten amendments to the Constitution were meant to apply *only* to the federal government. One could even argue that the first nine amendments were summed up in the tenth, which promised state sovereignty in all matters not specifically delegated to the central government. What is needed is a definitive judgment (or, lacking that, an additional amendment) that would invalidate the doctrine of incorporation.

Unfortunately, hoping for the appointment of "conservative" judges is not enough. By their very nature, judicial conservatives show an exaggerated deference for settled law (the principle of *stare decisis*). What is needed to restore the original federalist balance is the sort of counterrevolutionary judicial activism that we are not likely to see. At a more fundamental level, it is ludicrous for the states to allow their sovereignty to be defined by lifetime appointees of the central government.

Because Donald Davidson's native South had economic and cultural interests but insufficient political power, it had been perpetually exploited by the industrial Northeast. Were the two regions not part of a larger political entity called the "United States," the situation Davidson describes might well be labeled colonialism.

The principles of interposition, nullification, and—ultimately—secession would allow the states an active role in determining and enforcing their own prerogatives. Few would argue that the United States should abandon her vital national interests to adhere to a pronouncement by the United Nations. Believers in federalism would allow the states the same latitude in dealing with the government in Washington.

Although the federal government has proved itself able and willing to invade its own provinces to enforce its will, the preferred method of control is financial. Federal "aid" means federal control of everything from educational policy to speed limits on the highway. The only way to slay the beast is to starve it—not by cutting taxes but by eliminating its ability to tax. Let the central government be supported in its legitimate functions by voluntary assessments from the individual states. The power of the purse would be the most tangible means of enforcing interposition and nullification.

As the Agrarians knew, the true strength of America was not in the machinations of its imperial class but in the lives of its ordinary people. In the Preface to his book *The Nine Nations of North America* (1981), Joel Garreau writes that, "if Washington, D.C., were to slide into the Potomac tomorrow under the weight of its many burdens and crises, . . . North America would not suddenly look around to discover a strange and alien world. It would see a collection of healthy, powerful constituent parts that we've known all our lives." I suspect that Donald Davidson would have agreed. c

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The Case for American Secession

Still a Good Idea

by Kirkpatrick Sale

There has always been talk about secession in this country by those variously disgruntled on both the right and left, but, since the last presidential election, which revealed deep-seated divisions in American society over a variety of fundamental issues, that talk has grown exponentially. Such talk is not likely to lead to a dissolution of this country into separate states or regions, but that is by no means inconceivable. The issue should be taken seriously and examined carefully.

The first question is whether secession is legal—whether the Constitution can be read, and history cited, as permitting (or at least not forbidding) a state to declare its independence from the Union. Scholars have come down on both sides of this issue, but that fact alone suggests that there is a legitimate argument to be made. To put it simply: The Tenth Amendment reserves powers not delegated to the United States to the states or the people, so states may act unless specifically prohibited. The Constitution in fact says nothing about secession, and, as Southern states were seceding, Congress considered an amendment *forbidding* secession—a strong indication that secession is permissible. Three of the original thirteen states (Rhode Island, New York, and Virginia) kept an explicit right to secede when they joined the Union, and, since that was never challenged or questioned, it must be a right that all states enjoy. In the 19th century, before South Carolina began the bandwagon of secession in 1860, seven states (Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Georgia, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Vermont) enacted acts of nullification—refusing to recognize some or all of the powers of the federal government—without any retaliation by Washington.

Of course, Lincoln's government acted as if secession were illegal and unconstitutional, and its victory established the practical case that states will be punished if they try to secede, and the Constitution is irrelevant. It did not establish a legal case, however, and the legal (not to mention moral) argument for the *right* to secede remains strong—so strong that, even if it were denied in the U.S. courts, it would likely be defended in the court of international opinion by many of the world's nations, including those in the European Union and those that have recently exercised that right (in the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, for example). And that might make it difficult for the federal government to act against a state that has voted for secession, particularly if there were no overriding moral issues (*e.g.*, slavery) and the state proved agreeable to negotiation over federal property and assets within its boundaries.

Kirkpatrick Sale is the author of 13 books, including Human Scale *and* Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision *(University of Georgia Press). He is a founder and director of The Middlebury Institute for "the study of separatism, secession, and self-determination."*

A second question arises over whether the U.S. government *could* allow a state (or a group of states) to secede, if this action threatened its sovereignty and power over the remaining states. The federal government might not want to let California go, for fear that Cascadia (Oregon and Washington) and New England (and who knows how many disgruntled others?) would follow suit. If it still had the military means and the loyalty of the remaining troops, it might be expected to contrive a way (a Gulf of Tonkin or WMD excuse) to justify an invasion.

And yet, it is hard to believe that Washington would actually command its troops to mow down Los Angelenos and San Franciscans the way they do the civilians of Fallujah and Najaf, or withstand the barrage of criticism, domestic and international, if it did. Such an act would more likely propel additional secessions than gain support. It is harder still to think that the troops would actually carry out such an order, killing (ex-)Americans on (ex-)American territory. And if the troops did actually succeed in conquering and occupying an independent state, the population would be virtually uncontrollable: If it is not possible to win the hearts and minds of Vietnamese and Iraqis by invasion, think how much less possible it would be to win over people who had voted for secession with the full knowledge that it might lead to war.

It is not fantastic, then, to imagine that, instead of a futile war, Washington would be willing to negotiate a settlement in the hopes that, by giving concessions on, say, autonomy and self-regulation and by demonstrating the extent of federal dollars lost, it could win a secessionist state back into the Union. In some cases, that might well happen, and, if it failed, it would at least show a government intelligent and confident enough to act as a future ally rather than a marauding warmonger. And as an ally, it might be able to establish diplomatic and trade ties that would allow it to continue using such resources and talents of the new state as it wanted, perhaps even the bases it had previously used—with the additional benefit of no longer having to maintain federal offices, regulators, highways, parks, dams, and such, and even presumably with a negotiated fee in compensation for these lost assets.

There is another strategy that a federal government determined to quash secession might take that involves no troops, no war—nothing but a few phone calls. Washington might put pressure on large chain operations—Wal-Mart, Target, McDonald's, General Motors, Gannett, *etc.*—to cease doing business in the secessionist state, lest the feds make things difficult for them in all the others. And, unless the secession is so widespread that more states are out than in (a highly unlikely scenario), the corporations will comply. Would such a threat cut the legs out from under a secessionist state and force it to come crawling back to the Union? I think not, for several reasons.

First, a seceding state would already be working toward self-

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sufficiency in a great many areas and have developed trading links with other nations for those goods and services it could not provide for locally. Such self-sufficiency would have to be carefully planned for and be seen generally as workable and desirable, but, if the secessionist movement did its homework and selling right, it could make local development out to be a deeply patriotic, and possibly profitable, act. Like Japan historically, and a number of other states more recently, a seceding state would adopt a tactic that Jane Jacobs has called "import replacement"—the building of bicycles at home, recycling the metals and materials from the dumps and by the wayside, instead of buying them from abroad. It would certainly not be able to offer bikes for sale as cheaply as Wal-Mart does, at least at first, but it would put many more people to work per bike and strengthen its economy in ways that would eventually enable its people to buy the more expensive product. Imagine this going on for a host of other goods across the state, replacing those that can be made by intelligent recycling and manufacturing; refitting and reusing others; developing handicrafts as a substitute for machinery to create others; refusing to make those that are pointless, wasteful, environmentally harmful, or costly; and foregoing many that turn out, after a while, to be unnecessary or undesirable. Wal-Mart not only wouldn't be missed but would, upon reflection, be seen as having been a foolish enterprise that foisted too much needless "stuff," in too many useless varieties, of too shoddy a manufacture, with too many added-in transportation costs, on a gullible and malleable public. Those citizens who really missed the big chain stores would stoically bear that burden as good and loyal patriots.

A second reason that the economic threat would not have much force is that the new state might well start out with more money in its coffers because it would not have to pay federal income, gasoline, telephone, and other taxes; 17 states (12 of them "blue," interestingly enough) now pay more to the federal government than they get back in federal benefits. California got back just 78 cents in benefits for every dollar she sent to Washington in 2003 (according to the Tax Foundation) and, as the independent Republic of California, would thereby have an extra 22 cents in her pocket for every dollar. That would have meant, in 2004, that the citizens would have kept $88 million that could have been used for local projects.

Of course, not every state is California, and the attempt at some sort of economic independence would work out differently in different places. If a state could not survive on its own economically, it would be very foolish for its people to launch a secessionist movement. A great many states could be economically viable on their own, however, by establishing trade with outside nations, including the United States and Canada. The necessity of economic survival is a very fertile mother, and, like many small nations, an independent state could find ways of making itself useful in the economic world; indeed, some of the richest nations—Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Cayman Islands, Iceland, Belgium, San Marino, and Singapore—are among the smallest (and that is leaving aside the Persian Gulf oil states).

The last reason for being optimistic about small-state viability and the nullity of the Wal-Mart strategy has to be viewed in the context of the economic future of the United States. I happen to be among the growing band of people who believe that extremely difficult times lie ahead—in the nearer rather than further future—as a combination of crises and calamities pushes us to a completely new kind of society. They include the dwindling of cheap oil supplies (which already seems to have begun) and skyrocketing gasoline prices; the collapse of the value of the dollar from the spiraling trade deficit and national debt; the bursting of the real-estate bubble; the effect of global warming on agriculture and fisheries; the rise of sea levels; the spread of diseases old and new; the increase in severe weather (of which Katrina is a foretaste); the diminution of fresh water; the exhaustion of tropical forests; the erosion of arable soils; the continued pollution of air and water; the depletion of mineral resources; and the whole impact of human activity on the global environment.

As a result of all that—or, indeed, of any of several parts of that—the national economy will have to transform itself. What follows will, in fact, be less a national than a local economy, particularly as gasoline supplies diminish and become prohibitively expensive and the dollar becomes an increasingly irrelevant measure of worth. James Howard Kunstler, whose new book, *The Long Emergency*, demonstrates the likelihood of just such a future, writes that it

> will require us to downscale and re-scale virtually everything we do and how we do it, from the kind of communities we physically inhabit to the way we grow our food to the way we work and trade the products of our work. . . . Anything organized on the large scale, whether it is government or a corporate business enterprise such as Wal-Mart, will wither as the cheap energy props that support bigness fall away.

And then a small, independent state, which can be more or less buffered from the national emergency and dependent on a relatively self-sufficient economy, makes a lot of sense.

That might be the best argument for secession. If the future is going to be anything like what we alarmists are saying, there would seem to be a need to establish small-scale institutions and enterprises and trading circles as soon as possible, along with revivified community enterprises and cottage craftsmanship, and a statewide level suggests itself as the appropriate scale. And if that can be done in connection with political and cultural independence, such economic independence makes a powerful and attractive package—even, perhaps, a necessary one.

This country simply is not working right—as both the war in Iraq and the bumbling of Katrina (at all levels) make clear—and its corruption and inefficiency are harmful to the bulk of the population. The federal government, aside from being bureaucracy bound and politically hamstrung, is too big and complicated and inherently incompetent, and its attempt to provide for 280 million people and maintain a global empire of 725 military bases has proved to be impossible, placing terrible political and financial burdens on everyone. Secession would allow states to escape this Leviathan, keep their human and financial resources from going down the rathole, avoid association with the failed politics of an ugly empire, and set their own policies (on same-sex "marriage," abortion, stem-cell research, *etc.*) without interference from a distant central government increasingly in the hands of corporate interests and neoconservative ideologues. It would allow a blue state a chance to escape from the policies and culture of a red-state government and set its own course. It would, in short, allow people to leave the country they dislike without leaving the homes they cherish. What could make more sense? c

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In Late November

by David Middleton

Through autumn's last candescent sugar field
Fire moves across tough stubble stalk by stalk,
Consumed by what its very flames proclaim
In updrafts sifting embers sweet as smoke
That rolls below a billowing drift of stars.

November's mellow twilights well distilled
Into the barest clarities of fall
Reveal the regal purples of the earth,
The maple leaf, grape, pansy, louring cloud,
Dark harvests of all seasons, saints, and souls.

Wide pumpkin grins with ivories of rind
Illumined by a candle in the seed
Are fiery smiles drawing from grave and grove
Witch, ghost, cloaked bones, and troll come out to taste
Each fallen apple, walnut, muscadine.

And so the old new year begins in death
When dead things breathe and live things hold their breath
Until the shortest day's low winter sun
Heightens the primal clash of blight and bloom,
Noon's asters flowering gold in ice and light.

Yet tired now with our bounty's mounting waste,
These barrels, bins, and barns so overflowed,
And past both rest and labor like the stars—
Unknowable, though beautiful and true,
Night's riven givens burning unconcerned—

We look up rapt and baffled by the fire
That draws all swains and wise men from the sweet
Cave-stable, upper room, and bitter hill
Toward deep blue fields of stubble-lights aflame
Like watchtowers with no message but their name.

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The Writer as Farmer

by James Everett Kibler

Melanie Anderson

Nights are pitch dark here. Looking up at a wonderfully clear sky, I think of how few places today permit stars. The sickly yellow-brown blur of cities has killed the most glorious God-given beauty of all. With the stars has gone reverence, too, and maybe at least partly as a result of the same.

With all the technology, with all the pronouncements of advances, all the hype over things we own and with which we insulate ourselves in our hedonism, with all the self-congratulatory boasting about today's "higher standard of living," we no longer have the sheer staggering beauty of stars, a majesty so startling indeed that they awe to silence and wonder. How many today have had the privilege to live this experience? I offer a prayer of thanks for the blessing of stars.

The standard of living in our unhealthy day of enforced consumerism is measured by the number of commodes in a house, the number of house telephones, televisions, Jacuzzis and hot tubs, home offices to house computers and their assorted paraphernalia, the number of cars, the number of bays for them in the garage, the size of the swimming pool. Gadgets galore is the foundation for this rawly materialistic way.

As I watch their stately progress, I conclude that, without stars, man should never be proud of his much-vaunted achievements. Without them, such a "standard of living" should be emblazoned in red: IMPOVERISHED or DEPRIVED. No number of television, movie, or computer screens can even faintly seek to measure up to them. And it is far more than being culturally deprived. It is the basic bedrock impoverishment of the most serious sensory kind.

So my rural nights, and those of many farmers, are still dark, very dark, and lit with the dancing brilliance of stars.

The nights here are quiet but for tree frogs, cicadas, and the whippoorwill. Even their sounds aid sleep. The dawn comes gradually, gently, in this land. The very first greying brings me slowly awake. No jolt of a menacing alarm clock, so aptly named. The light prepares me. All the high beds in the farmhouse are positioned to face east. The tall windows that reveal curtainless the movement of stars now bring in the new day. The songbirds that gather and raise about the house are awaking, too. They give such odd waking-up sounds. I guess it is their yawns.

During the long summer growing season of the South, I wake at six. Having fallen asleep the night before at nine or nine-thirty—not too long after dark has come—I've had a full eight hours of rest. I'm in good spirits, eager for the new day. It's so full of promise. Through its patterned routine, it is continually varied and new.

The tall, old farmhouse, with doors and windows opened wide, breathes the cool of morn. I have no air-conditioning, am not hermetically sealed. There is no plastic, no vinyl siding to capsule me in. There are no storm windows and doors.

The routine is an ambitious one, but does not seem so. A good country breakfast, and I am at my chores.

It will be a hot day, so I am glad to be about the business of raising food from the ground. The sun climbs in the sky. I work till ten. Tomatoes are coming in. Okra must be picked each day, or it will cease to bear. Squash, too. Beans, too. In the heat, the plants hang stoically on. They remind me of my Southern people. They survive. This summer, the rain has been plenty. Even this late in the season, the purple dark skin of the eggplant is taut and shiny from the moisture within. The

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James Everett Kibler is author of Our Fathers' Fields *(winner of the Fellowship of Southern Authors Award for Nonfiction in 1999) and the recently published novel* Walking Toward Home. *His novel* Memory's Keep *is due this spring. He writes and farms in the county of his birth in Upcountry South Carolina.*

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split-oak baskets are brim full. They make the shoulders ache to carry them in. There will be plenty to give to the neighbors up the road, and more to can, swap, barter, and sell. Now, maybe some work with the hoe to chop that summer grass in the furrows, the grass that is likely the result of a seven years' seed. (Farmers know what I mean.)

My cotton shirt is moist with sweat or, if I work much past ten, wringing wet.

Time to go in to the welcome of shade and the cool of lofty, tall rooms. Good dishes of clean food revitalize. I do not forget to bless my food. The old miracle of being able to feed oneself from a seed and the soil is never far from my mind. I think how the smallest taken-for-granted things of life are miracles, too.

I relish my meal, raised without man-made poisons or chemical fertilizers by my own hand and with the God-ordained sweat of my brow. My sweat has dripped from my body. Its minerals have enriched and become a part of my soil.

Time to catch my breath and sit down. I pick up the pen.

The bright sheet of paper looks almost as glorious as the shine of stars. The possibilities that wait for what might be put on it are almost as mysterious as they. Do the words come from out there where the stars reside? I cannot understand why a famous painter of our time has said that he dreaded the blank canvas or why the celebrated author has declared he felt depressed at the sight of a new page.

Earlier, while doing the duties of farming, I had been thinking things through. Some ideas, some words, some phrases—I had been moving them around, adjusting, rehearsing, forming, reforming, organizing in my mind. The rhythm of my work is accompanied in harmony by the rhythm of words.

I begin. Today, the ink flows effortlessly, like the great river that moves silently beyond the feet of my fields. Like the handheld plow across the row, my lines move arrow straight. They stop and turn at the edge of the page, the edge of the field.

I write through the heat of the day. I sit in my boxers, without shirt, under the big ceiling fan. Its blades make a gentle swooping sound. The chintz window curtains blow in, blow out. No screens restrain them. They are free to move at their will. It has reached 95 degrees outside. It is an Upcountry Carolina August, and the dog days. Less breeze than usual stirs. I work till four or five. A simple but big supper gives a time to reflect and relish my food, and I rest awhile. It satisfies that the meal on the table has been grown and harvested all in one place, in one seamless way. No breaks and rendings on wheels of trucks or tumblings in bins, in the progress from seed and soil to the table at suppertime. Once again, I give heartfelt blessing over my bounty of food. I remember those who came before me and dig in.

Now after supper, there may be some mail to be answered, perhaps some bills to be paid. Or a little reading—a kind of dessert that tops the blackberry cobbler, made from fruit picked in grandmother's berry bucket in the waste places on the edges of my fields. While I picked, I thought of her and my mama when we had gone out on such outings before. I telescope time. The false linear, scientific progression of it is completely vanquished and belied by memory.

Six-thirty or thereabouts, well fed and rested, it is time to go back to the fields, to the necessary chores. The August sun is lower in the sky. The day is cooling a little now. "The heat's back is broke," old farmers would say of this time, and now I can work some more. I fetch in the pail of milk cooling beneath the springhouse floor. I see how the rich Guernsey cream has risen to the top. I bring more vegetables in, tidy up the barn, spread compost on the soil soon to be tilled up for the planting of the fall turnip greens. A good two hours, maybe three, and it is time for bath and bed. The time has turned darker than grey, past what the old folks called early candle-lighting time.

I have no shower. I sit and soak. My muscles thank me for the rest. The place's one major mechanical luxury is the pump of my well. It is an old one but does duty still. The well itself strikes deep into the granite bedrock and brings forth cold water unadulterated by man. It has its own crystal taste from the stone. I can distinguish that taste readily. It is the taste of my soil.

It is time for bed. I am reflecting upon something I have read some time before. The words are Andrew Lytle's. I remember him as one of the Agrarians who also farmed. Today, I am thinking of his shrewd cultural observations, his words. One such surmise comes particularly to mind. He gave the mark of the Southerner that distinguished him from those men of colder climes. He noted that, in first meeting, the non-Southerner would usually ask, "What do you do?" The Southerner asks, instead, "Where are you from?" Mr. Lytle went further. The real Southerner—that is, he of the soil—enquires, "Where do your people bury?" That is the sum total of it all.

Last Sunday evening, introducing two of my country friends for the first time from across the geographical separation of some 20 miles, I noted that they proved Mr. Lytle true. They started straight in by saying where their people, close and extended, lay in the ground. They soon found that their families shared the same sacred sod, and all was immediately right with the world. Their smiles were sincere. They beamed recognition faithful and true.

But I reflected then how proud of them I was that evening as they took Mr. Lytle one step further. After quickly finding out who they were and how they were connected on (and in) the common sod of Kelly's Chapel burying ground, they moved swiftly to pledging how they would help each other to keep this spot in the long-growing-seasoned South weed-clean. Ola Jean said she is good with a hoe. Ronnie volunteered his expertise with a weed-eater and a fire-ant remedy. The talk was easy and flowed as if they were old childhood friends. "It's so tacky to see cemeteries overgrown, their tablets knocked down," Ola Jean concludes. *Tacky, but so thoroughly modern*, I think to myself. *Who cares for the dead?* these moderns ask. *They had their time! Now it's mine!* Yes, the self-pampering, self-aggrandizing, self-congratulating Me Generation writ large. *Me*, *My*, and *Mine*, their favorite words, gathering up all the things of the world to their breasts in material quest . . . a debasing of the word, the old Holy-Grail-striving gone secular sour and bad.

Ronnie has tips on how broken marble can be cleaned and repaired. He will get his sons and some few more of the family and will help Ola Jean. They will meet bright and early next Saturday morn. Ola Jean will bring ham biscuits, peach cobbler, tomato sandwiches, potato salad, and more to feed the crew. They will use their common great-great Uncle Johnny's big flat marble sarcophagus tomb as a dinner table to spread a red-checkered table cloth on. I figure, if I can get ahead in my chores, I might come along. I like Ola Jean and Ronnie.

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Their values are healthy; their priorities, sound. No retiring solitary Thoreau passing through a place to get books from the sojourn, I long for community, and seek out society and company. I have made certain that my future has become inseparably entwined with that of this place. On this good soil, I have taken my stand. As my writing, farming friend Mr. Berry loves frequently to say, "What I stand for, is what I stand on." I can say no better than he.

Such is the life, big things and small, of the writer-farmer. He prays the thread of his fabric runs true enough, warp and woof, solid and lasting and strong, a cloth made on the old over-shot loom in the quiet of his great-grandmama's notched-log loom room. He has time to back off and see the fabric's design. It is sturdy, white linen, made from the flax grown on the place. It will last longer than nails. In his own way and time, he gets things balanced and thoughtfully done. "Wholistic living," the modern academic might say. The ancients knew and, without jargon, said it better, too. Today, he has had four or five good hours of writing in the white-hot heat while Sirius blazed. Today, he has furnished his own energies, clean calories, to stoke the body's furnace, from the sweat of his brow—a good seven hours' worth at this time of the year. In that way, he has seen those calories through from seed to the pot and the pan. He thinks how such satisfaction is now rare in this assembly-line, one-specialized-cog per person, time and land. Seeing it through from start to finish, he can take pride in his work, what he has done. He thinks, *How oddly like writing a novel, a poem, or play.*

Yes, he has put in a good 12-hour day and has had, besides, chance for reflection and stretches of time lined with the quiet of a kind of constant prayer, prayers of petition, of thanks, of celebration, of praise, and now he is tired. His mind is emptying for sleep.

He sleeps as if drugged, but no Zoloft or Sominex for him. His conscience does not nag. He has not had to prey off another, not had to flatter falsely, cheat, wheedle, dissemble, or lie. He has had to curry the favor of no one. His thoughts have not been on the feverish necessity of purchasing things for buying happiness, for upping his standard of life. He is perfectly satisfied with what he has and desires no more. He validates his own lifestyle and uses no consumerist measuring stick from media values and ads. His has not been or ever will be a cash-register evaluation of life. He has not been at the mercy of machines—no machine-culture for him! He has had no stress and jangle of city's noise. He has had neither fool to annoy, nor made himself into one. He has been independent enough of all but his God. Yes, Mr. Jefferson was right, he concludes. "Dependence begets subservience," he had said. So had William Byrd, Virginia planter years before him, too. Alexander Hamilton was fatally wrong and paved the way of subservience and dependence in the frightening, consumerist, planned-obsolescent power state, run by banks, corporations, and their bought government elite, whose policies have made farmers such as him close to extinct. He is not ignorant of the ways of the world but, for a while, puts the thinking of them aside.

As he drifts off, a prayer moves on his lips. "Save man from the results of his own folly," he prays. In the country's real dark, he half opens his eyes. Through the high, many-paned windows of his second-story room, his last waking sight is of stars. C

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Solving U.S. Problems in Korea Through Unification

by Edward A. Olsen

The United States has been heavily involved in Korean affairs since the end of World War II. Although our original goal of helping Korea regain her independence "in due course" was not supposed to entail a decades-long process, as events evolved, the United States became entangled in geopolitical obligations that have, so far, lasted for 60 years. At the core of that entanglement is the issue of how to deal with inter-Korean tensions. Resolving those tensions clearly would help Korea and—if it is done soundly—might even improve U.S. policy in the overall Asia-Pacific region.

The obvious problem the United States faces in Korea centers on North Korea's nuclear-weapons agenda and how the Pyongyang government headed by Kim Jong-il manipulates that agenda. However, a spectrum of problems plagues U.S. relations with both Koreas.

The Democratic People's Republic of (North) Korea (DPRK) has always feared and distrusted the United States because of our role in the Cold War and the Korean War and our attempts to leverage our alliance with the Republic of (South) Korea (ROK) against the DPRK. North Korea-U.S. relations worsened in the post-Cold War era, as Pyongyang reacted adversely to the George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations' interventionism worldwide. This reinforced North Korea's long-standing quest for self-reliance and her desire to strengthen her military deterrence by pursuing a nuclear option. Against the background of an ambiguous U.S.-DPRK dialogue during the Clinton years, which came close to the brink of war, Republican accusations of Democratic appeasement of the Pyongyang regime predisposed the current Bush administration toward a hard-line posture that was reciprocated by North Korea. The hawkish Bush doctrine and its controversial preemption paradigm that followed in the wake of September 11 intensified North Korean anxieties. President Bush's inclusion of the DPRK into the "Axis of Evil" and his war against its Iraqi member sent ominous signals to Pyongyang. So, too, did Bush's public "loathing" of Kim Jong-il, his reliance on neoconservative advisors who favored regime change in Pyongyang, and his enthusiastic support for Undersecretary of State John Bolton's public characterization of Kim as a "tyrannical dictator" and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's description of North Korea as an "outpost of tyranny."

Edward A. Olsen is a professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and the author of U.S. National Defense for the Twenty-First Century: The Grand Exit Strategy *(Frank Cass) and* Toward Normalizing U.S.-Korea Relations: In Due Course? *(Lynne Rienner). The views expressed are personal and do not represent those of the U.S. government.*

In previous administrations, negative U.S.-DPRK relations were largely offset by positive U.S.-ROK relations, but the current administration's relations with the Roh Moo-hyun government in Seoul have not been particularly good. Bush's hawkish approach toward North Korea is more in tune with Roh's political opponents in South Korea, whose roots are in previous authoritarian regimes. Even before Roh became president, that was clear in Bush's strained relations with Kim Dae-jung, who set the initial tone for ROK progressive domestic politics and boldly promulgated the ROK's "sunshine policy" toward North Korea—winning the Nobel Peace Prize in the process. The Bush administration's expectations that Roh's rival—Lee Hoi-chang—in the 2002 presidential campaign would prevail and its treatment of Lee's team as a virtual government-in-waiting set the stage for continued strained relations with Seoul.

Those strains are manifest in Washington's minimalist support for Roh's engagement "policy for peace and prosperity." The strains were evident in South Korean polls from 2004 to 2005 that indicated that more South Koreans believed the United States was a greater threat to Korean peace than North Korea was and that the United States was a greater obstacle to Korean unification than North Korea was. The U.S.-ROK alliance partners have also had to cope with additional pressures, including those resulting from American plans to reduce U.S. forces in Korea; South Korea's unease over the impact that greater U.S.-Japan strategic cooperation regarding Taiwan will have on PRC-ROK relations; and President Roh's increasing emphasis on South Korea's independent role as a geopolitical "balancer" between China and the United States.

A rift is growing between the United States and South Korea over how best to deal with North Korea, which reflects South Korea's very different understanding of North Korea's identity. To all South Koreans, North Korea is the other half of their nation. Their beleaguered North Korean brethren are viewed sympathetically, which supports the Roh government's efforts to engage North Korea in a constructive dialogue, extend a helping hand to foster creative socioeconomic reforms, and plan for a future in which North Koreans will incrementally rectify their flawed policies as they prepare for a peaceful reunion of the Korean nation-state. Although Washington formally supports Korean reunification, it is not a particularly avid supporter and does not embrace South Korea's flexible agenda toward North Korea. The intensity of the U.S. hard line regarding North Korea's nuclear policies and many neoconservative policymakers' and advisors' desire for "regime change" in Pyongyang help to widen the gap. The repeated attempts by U.S. and South Korean leaders to present a united front—such as the June 10, 2005, summit between Presidents Bush and Roh—are commendable from a diplomatic perspective, but, so far, they have not proved

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to be plausible or durable.

The role of China in inter-Korean affairs and the rise of China as a global economic and military power exacerbates those differences. The Bush administration's Wilsonian emphasis on exporting democracy and freedom and its reluctance to entertain the possibility that China might legitimately challenge our role as the post-Cold War era's "sole superpower" clearly cause tensions in Sino-U.S. relations. The PRC's refusal to embrace Western-style political freedom, her rapid economic ascendancy, and her obvious geopolitical ambitions raise many concerns. Whether the United States is a unilateralist empire or plays a more benign role as a benevolent hegemon in global and regional affairs, Washington's leadership style—especially under the post-September 11 Bush administration—raises concerns about Sino-American harmony. South Korea's perception of the PRC-U.S. balance of power is infused with President Roh's "balancer" vision, ROK unease about Japanese readiness to cooperate militarily with the United States to protect Taiwan, and South Korea's positive expectations about China's part in bringing about Korean reconciliation and reunification.

Consequently, leaders in Seoul tend to be skeptical of the soundness of American assumptions that China will help the United States curb North Korea's nuclear agenda. As Koreans, they suspect they have a better grasp of what China really desires, and is willing to do, in guiding North Korea toward reunification. After all, a reunified Korea would still share a border with the PRC. And despite some recent Sino-Korean frictions about their ancient historical legacy, many South Koreans seem willing to explore returning to a more traditional Korean approach toward a Sinocentric regional system. The negative consequences of that shift for the existing U.S.-ROK alliance are fed by recurring waves of anti-American sentiment in South Korea that send odd signals of rapport between the two Koreas and reinforce China's leadership role.

Against this complex background, there is no shortage of alternatives to the current U.S. policy being suggested by Korea specialists who are liberal-progressive critics of the Bush administration. Their views are well represented by the "Alliance of Scholars Concerned About Korea" (*www.asck.org*). Conservative critics of the Bush administration's Korea policy argue that its neoconservative approach is really a hawkish brand of Wilsonian interventionism. There are, in addition, many conservative and centrist policy specialists who advocate a less hawkish U.S. approach to Korean affairs, such as the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy (*www.realisticforeignpolicy.org*), which promotes a far less interventionist U.S. role in the world.

The best way for the United States to resolve her dual set of problems with North and South Korea is to adopt a more pragmatic policy toward both the DPRK's nuclear agenda and the ROK's ambivalence about the soundness of U.S. relations with both China and North Korea. Unlike the Middle East, where Washington has been developing a "road map" for years, in Korea, the United States persists in avoiding bumps and potholes without a clear sense of where the road may lead. It is time for the United States to create a "road map" for Korea, too, working in conjunction with both Koreas and the other major powers involved in the six-party talks on the nuclear issue—namely, China, Japan, and Russia. Washington places too much emphasis on a geopolitical stability that is predicated on a divided Korea. It should learn from both Koreas and use their unification agendas to help foster a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula, which will add to the stability of East Asia through bilateral and multilateral diplomatic negotiations to create a united Korean nation-state.

The creation of a U.S. "road map" for Korean reunification could help in a neighboring arena. The successful use of innovative engagement measures by which a divided nation benefits from external cooperation could motivate the divided Chinese nation to reunite the PRC and Taiwan through negotiations backed by the international community.

As part of this process, the United States and South Korea—in conjunction with the other major powers—would have ample opportunities to use economic incentives to induce change in the DPRK. The United States should abandon the hard-line notion of "regime change" in Pyongyang, replacing it with a moderate vision of regime transformation. This would be entirely consistent with South Korea's former "sunshine policy" and her current "policy of peace and prosperity." In order to pursue this approach, the United States would have to abandon her aversion to conducting high-level bilateral negotiations with the North Koreans. U.S. policy would be much improved if it followed the approach advocated by Seoul since the late 1980's, when the ROK implemented its *Nordpolitik*—modeled on West Germany's *Ostpolitik*—which encourages both Koreas to have bilateral relationships with the four major powers and creates a basis for expanded multilateral dialogues. Such multilateralism can serve as the basis of Korean coexistence, reconciliation, and reunification. If conducted as the South Koreans envision, the engagement processes between the two Koreas, and between each Korea and the four major powers, have enormous potential to instill a sense of innovation, making the North Koreans more amenable to compromise and accommodation.

As the United States emphasizes the benefits to both sides of a reunited Korean nation-state and becomes actively engaged in facilitating that goal, we would be much better positioned to negotiate an amicable resolution of the nuclear-weapons issue. North Korea could make concessions and open up to verification in exchange for U.S. support for the economic transforma-

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tion of the DPRK and negotiations concerning a nonaggression commitment with the DPRK of the sort the two Koreas agreed to in 1992.

Furthermore, since Washington already assumes it needs to redeploy U.S. forces here and there around the world, why not use cuts in U.S. forces in South Korea as a means to persuade North Korea to make concessions? This approach would also help to persuade South Korea that a revamped U.S.-Korea security arrangement can be made beneficial to both Koreas as they once again become a unified state.

This approach could also enhance the prospects for geopolitical stability in Northeast Asia and beyond. Were the United States to pursue this option, it would send profound signals to China, Japan, and Russia. It is unlikely that any of them would oppose a policy of this sort. On the contrary, they are likely to want to become part of a broader multilateral process in support of the U.S. role in inter-Korean affairs. While that could, in part, be motivated by desires to prevent the United States from becoming too influential in shaping Korea's future, it is best to perceive such multilateral participation as reflecting Chinese, Japanese, and Russian desires to use that process to attain their own goals and to cope with each country's legacy of troubled policies regarding Korea. There is a small chance that China might try to use these circumstances to edge the United States out of a prominent role in Korean reunification in order to increase the PRC's status at the United States' geopolitical expense. On balance, this possibility is unlikely, because of the extremely high budgetary costs the PRC would have to bear to bring North Korea near the economic level of South Korea, enabling them to merge. China is more likely to want to work together with the United States and other major powers to facilitate Korean reconciliation and unification than to confront this financial risk.

Americans should recognize and accept the rationales behind all four major powers being engaged in a Korean reunification process. It would be very much in America's national and regional interests to welcome as many constructive players as are willing to be engaged. This would provide the process with international credibility and expand the pool of engaged contributors to the transformation of North Korea, which is certain to be very expensive. By welcoming China, Japan, and Russia into the process, the United States would strengthen her ties with each of them. Clearly, the bilateral relationship that stands out in that regard is that between the United States and China. The more the PRC and the United States can work together to help Korea resolve her division—and thereby eliminate the threat of a nuclear-armed North Korea—the more Sino-American relations overall are likely to be improved. That, in turn, will minimize—if not eliminate—the strain on the U.S.-ROK relationship that results from Seoul's interactions with Beijing and President Roh's use of the balancer paradigm.

The creation of a U.S. "road map" for Korean reunification has the potential for helping in a neighboring arena. The successful use of innovative engagement measures by which a divided nation benefits from external cooperation could motivate the divided Chinese nation to reunite the PRC and Taiwan through peaceful negotiations backed by the international community. Were the United States to facilitate the resolution of these two national-unification problems, fostering balanced regional harmony, she would substantially reduce her entangling geopolitical obligations and make serious progress toward American strategic independence. c

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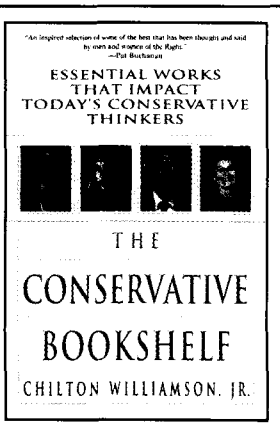

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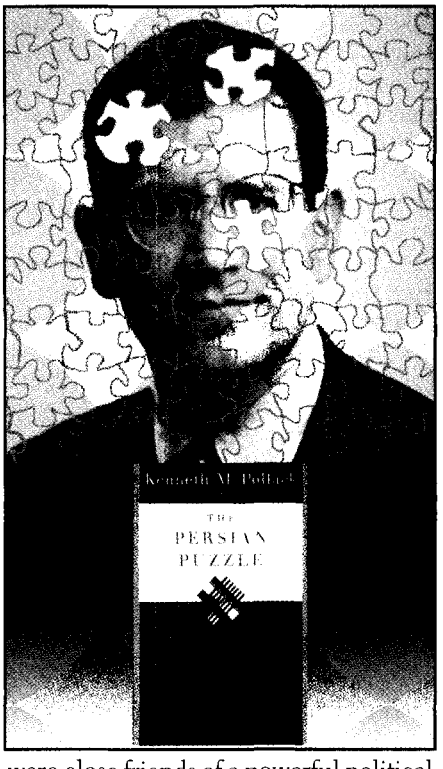
Misinterpreting Iran—and the World

by Leon Hadar

"Learn to think imperially."

—Joseph Chamberlain

The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America
by Kenneth M. Pollack
New York: Random House;
576 pp., $26.95



Imagine that, for a few years, you had been investing the money you had saved for your daughter's college education in one of those moderately conservative plans that provide some increase in the value of the investment without exposing it to major risks. But then your financial planner—let's call him Ken P.—came up with a really great idea.

He had heard through the grapevine on Wall Street that a grand company in Texas called Enron was, for all practical purposes, a cash cow. He recommended taking out the money invested in that dead-end Fidelity fund and putting it all in Enron stocks. And since you trusted the guy, you ended up following his advice—and are still trying to figure out how to finance your daughter's junior year at Harvard.

The planner *did* call you to apologize. "I'm so, so sorry—really!" he said. "You have to understand that the conventional wisdom on the Street at the time was that Enron was very big." Indeed, major investment banks had forecast a significant rise in the value of Enron, whose bosses were close friends of a powerful political family. Once more, Ken P. pleaded for your forgiveness and expressed his hope that you would continue to avail yourself of his services. He wanted you to permit him to invest for you the money you had saved for your retirement in a new financial scheme that would make a lot—a *lot*—of money!

Would you actually consent to let him do so? My guess is that—however politely—you'd fire Ken P. And I would not be surprised if Ken P., given his abysmal track record, found it difficult to attract new clients. He might even have to leave the field of financial analysis and perhaps—who knows?—relocate to Washington, D.C., where failures and losers end up winning the Presidential Medal of Freedom (George Tenet, Paul Bremer), or serving as a successor to George Marshall and Henry Kissinger at the State Department (Condoleezza Rice), or perhaps even winning reelection as the president of the United States after getting the nation, under false pretenses, into a bloody, chaotic mess in Iraq.

Imagine now a foreign-policy expert who advised you, in 2002, to invade Iraq, on grounds that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and links to Osama bin Laden and the perpetrators of September 11 and that the Iraqi people were certain to welcome you as their liberators. But now it is 2005, with no WMDs having been discovered, no links found between Saddam and Osama, more than 1,800 American casualties incurred, and the prospect of a quagmire in Mesopotamia looming. What do you say to the "expert"?

Because he is not a hypothetical figure, after all. He is a flesh-and-blood person, and his full name is Kenneth Pollack. A former U.S. intelligence officer, he published in September 2002 a book with an ominous-sounding title, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*. Dr. Pollack, it should be emphasized, was (and is) a Democrat who worked at the Middle East desk under President Bill Clinton and was (and remains) a well-regarded personage in the U.S. foreign-policy establishment. (He was not, in other words, a devout Bushie or a neocon ideologue.) So when he assured readers of his book and op-ed columns, together with the viewers of the talking-head television shows, that Saddam had WMDs and links to Al Qaeda and called on the United States to invade Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein, people around Washington listened.

If ideas *do* matter in determining policies, Pollack clearly made a difference

Leon Hadar, a research fellow in foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East, *just published by Palgrave Macmillan.*

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when it came to the decision to go to war against Iraq. Bill Keller, the editor of the *New York Times*, admitted that he had been opposed to the invasion of Iraq before reading *The Threatening Storm*, which changed his view. More importantly, leading Democratic legislators on Capitol Hill who had been wavering on the issue may well have decided to give President Bush the green light in part, at least, on the recommendation of former President Clinton's respected aide. Indeed, as military analyst Fred Kaplan put it in the *Washington Post*:

> Rarely has a policy wonk made such a splash as Kenneth M. Pollack did two winters ago. His 2002 best-seller *The Threatening Storm* convinced hundreds of otherwise liberal opinion leaders—and, in turn, thousands and possibly millions of their readers and viewers—that invading Iraq was a good thing to do.

And today? Don't worry. Kenneth Pollack has not fallen on his sword, nor is he pounding the pavement. He is the director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, which is funded by Israeli-American billionaire Haim Saban. From 1995 to 1996, Pollack served as director for Near East and South Asian affairs at the National Security Council, and from 1999 to 2001, he served as director for Gulf affairs at the NSC, where he was the principal working-level official responsible for the implementation of U.S. policy toward Iran. Before his stint with the Clinton administration, he spent seven years in the CIA as a "Persian Gulf military analyst." Saban, Pollack's current sugar daddy, is also a major pal of the Clintons, which means that he has given them a lot of money and is expected to help finance Hillary's presidential race. (Who knows: Kenneth Pollack, national security advisor to President Clinton II?) Pollack, moreover, is married to Andrea Koppel, CNN State Department correspondent, who happens to be the daughter of ABC's *Nightline* star (and former State Department correspondent) Ted Koppel. In a town where officials, lawmakers, and pundits operate under the "shadow of the future," the Iraq disaster should not be an obstacle on Pollack's road to fame and fortune. No one in government, Congress, or the media wants to antagonize "Ken." After all, Pollack has publicly regretted his role in taking the United States to war in Iraq. During a postinvasion television appearance, he said that he was "apologizing" for his mistakes and that he was, well, "sorry." "Of course, I feel guilty about it. I feel awful . . . I'm sorry; I'm sorry!" he told the *New York Times Magazine* in a tongue-in-cheek sort of way. You know, he explained, the conventional wisdom among most "intelligence experts" at the time was that Saddam actually possessed all the dangerous things he was said to have had. Well, pre-war intelligence was severely hampered by a lack of physical access to, and direct knowledge of, Iraq on the part of analysts like himself. And didn't MI6 and the Mossad issue reports in 2002 that made exactly the same claims that he had made? Today, Pollack is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, writing op-ed columns for the *New York Times*, making TV appearances, and testifying on Capitol Hill as another storm threatens in the Middle East, presaged by rising tensions between the United States and another Persian Gulf country. Naturally, after Pollack's stunning success in forecasting developments in the Persian Gulf, inquiring minds want to know what his present take on the region might be. And so, in response to calls of "Encore! Encore!" from his fans, Kenneth Pollack has just published another best-seller: *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*.

Here, Pollack provides us with recommendations on how to deal with Iraq—sorry, Iran—now that the specter of the clerics in Tehran (whose nuclear ambitions and resources seem quite real) looms before Americans. We have a debate raging in Washington over what is to be done *vis-à-vis* another country that is acquiring WMDs, and, once again, Pollack is a central player in the "policy discourse." This time, he does not call for invading that country. While "Iran is on the wrong path and marching down it quickly," Pollack argues that invasion would be a serious mistake. Unfortunately, its sane conclusion does not prevent *The Persian Puzzle* from being, like *The Threatening Storm*, another long and boring book about an important and exciting subject written by a minor-league policy intellectual devoid of credibility.

When it comes to Iran, our "expert" appears to have a very basic knowledge of that country, its culture, and its language—he has never visited Iran nor read an Iranian newspaper or book. (Pollack does not speak or read Persian.) The author admits, further, that his understanding of Iran has been acquired by viewing that country "through the eyes of America's intelligence and defense communities." (As someone who has gathered much of what he knows about Iran from "open sources," including major non-Persian-language media, I have to conclude, after reading Pollack's book, that American spooks and intelligence analysts spend most of their day in reading the *New York Times* and watching CNN.) In the aftermath of September 11 and the many other failures of the U.S. "intelligence community," a certain level of skepticism seems in order when evaluating prognostications made by current and former Iraq hands who never bothered actually to experience the country at firsthand. Pollack, reflecting the views of his colleagues in government and the American foreign-policy establishment, reiterates that the "clock is ticking" toward regime change in Iran, while predicting over and again the imminent demise of the Islamic regime in Tehran and the (supposedly) inevitable "integration" of Iran into the "global economy" and the "international community." We are now in a position to test that brave prediction.

I finished reading Pollack's book just as Iran's recent presidential campaign was gaining momentum. Not surprisingly, the American media—especially the foreign-affairs experts in Washington who acquire much of their knowledge about the Middle East from "sources" in government, including those in the "intelligence community"—were predicting that the "moderate" candidates were poised to win the presidential race. Indeed, the spin offered by the *New York Times* was that the election in Iran, like much of Iranian politics as a whole, amounts to a power struggle between freedom-loving people who want to advance social and economic policies more in line with those of the liberal West and repressive clerics who promise a pure Islamic government. Not that any American pundit expected that any of the reformist candidates, led by Mostafa Moin, a former education minister, would win the race. Rather, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the 71-year-old cleric and former aide to Ayatollah Khomeini, a famously corrupt figure with a lot of blood on his hands, was the favorite of the American press. (*Time*'s internation-

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al edition even carried Rafsanjani on its cover a week before the election on June 17.) So when the Islamic ideologue and former mayor of Tehran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, ended up challenging Rafsanjani in the runoff (most experts had expected that Rafsanjani would have to beat Moin) on June 24 and defeated him by more than seven million votes, it was a . . . Big Surprise! for the *New York Times* and the many "sources" in the intelligence community and elsewhere.

The majority of voting Iranians, seeming to fit the profile of a Red State voter in the United States—loyal to the nation, faith, family, and traditional values—had elected a president who was not highly educated or very sophisticated, just your down-to-earth Average Ahmed who regards the Prophet Muhammad as his favorite political philosopher. In Iran, where one fifth of the population is unemployed and the majority of Iranians are less concerned with the rights of the Babes of Tehran than with eking out a living, people expected (wrongly, I believe) that the new president would deliver new jobs.

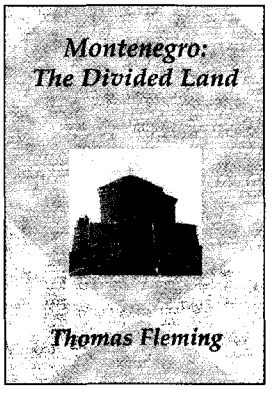
Having read Pollack's book, I assume that his explanation would most likely be that the election of Ahmadinejad was a reflection of the predominant traits of the Iranian national character as he describes them—xenophobia, emotionalism, an exaggerated sense of "self-importance," and a failure by the Iranians to realize that bringing down the ignorant clerics and "join[ing] the rest of the world" is in their national interest. Pollack and those who share the CIA mind-set have been expecting and predicting just such a *bouleversement* since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which, as you recall, had caught them all by another of those surprises, as described by David Harris in *The Crisis: The President, the Prophet, and the Shah—1979 and the Coming of Militant Islam*, another unremarkable study of the U.S.-Iran relationship by another unexceptional writer who does not even pretend to be an "Iran expert."

Those who apply the sort of perspective Pollack and Harris bring to their analyses of global affairs are doomed, almost inevitably, to surprise and disappointment. From Pollack's historical viewpoint, Americans commonly pursue foreign policy with "good intentions"—an understanding that Harris qualifies simply by noting that, while most Americans are indeed well intentioned, they fail at times to measure up to their own high-minded ambitions.

Pollack argues that, while the United States has done some silly and stupid things in the Middle East and often botched her relationship with Tehran, for the most part, she approached Iran as a friend and benefactor during most of the post-World War II era. Washington wanted to see the emergence of an "independent, stable, and prosperous Iran," and, to the extent that it intervened in Tehran's political affairs, its main goals were to ensure that the Iranians did not fall under the control of the Soviet Union and communism; to contain the pressures from supposedly cynical British imperialists; and to push for the necessary "political, economic, and social reform." On the other hand, the Iranians' attitude toward the United States has been marked at times by rising expectations regarding the way in which the United States might help them and, at others, by a sense of betrayal by America, as well as a deep paranoia reflecting what Pollack sees as Iranian national traits.

Even Pollack, however, appears to empathize with Iranian suspicions that American policies toward their country have been motivated less by "good intentions" and more by self-interest, as he recounts the dynamic set in 1953 when the Americans cooperated in the overthrow of Iran's democratically elected president, Mohammad Mossadegh, and his replacement by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Here, Pollack attempts a "balanced" approach, blaming both sides for the ensuing tensions—as though the fact that Mossadegh was "a true eccentric," who rejected the generous offers on oil profits that might have kept him in power, justified the decision by the Americans and the British to launch a coup in Iran. He blames President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles not for deposing Mossadegh but for helping to ignite the Iranians' traditional xenophobia and nationalist passion. While Pollack notes that the Mossadegh affair turned out to haunt the American-Iranian relationship for a very long time, while agreeing with the proposition that American intervention in Iran was perhaps carried out in "very unpopular ways," he is, nevertheless, appalled by the ingratitude of the Iranian people for the assistance and "good intentions" offered by the United States. Though the view that the United States, for her role in the overthrow of Mossadegh, was culpable in the establishment of the despotism that followed contains a "kernel of truth," Pollack contends that Mossadegh should be blamed for having pursued "undemocratic actions" and that, in any case, the Iranians would have deposed Mossadegh themselves, without help from the Americans.

This analysis contradicts the more credible and well-documented research provided by Stephen Kizner in *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. One does not have



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to credit the notion that Mossadegh was an "Iranian Gandhi" (though a mentally unstable character who sympathized with left-wing causes, he was, in essence, an Iranian nationalist) to conclude that Pollack is clearly understating the role played by the Americans and the CIA in destabilizing Iran and bringing down Mossadegh. Pollack's narrative is troubling less for its historical inaccuracies than for the sense of legitimacy it seems to provide for what has been called the Bush Protocol to the Monroe Doctrine. Indeed, such neoconservative chickenhawks as Michael Ledeen and Raul Grecht (another former CIA analyst) from the American Enterprise Institute are employing precisely this rationale in calling for a U.S.-led campaign to remove the current regime from power in Tehran and replace it with a pro-American one. Pollack shares the neocons' conviction that the clerics have lost the support of Iranians who want Iran to join the "community of nations"—an argument that can now be challenged in the aftermath of the presidential elections. But, as Pollack explains, the kind of cost-effective "regime change" strategy applied by Eisenhower and Dulles—spending one million dollars in CIA funds to round up and bribe street thugs to demonstrate against Mossadegh—is not a possibility today. The conservative religious figures are more deeply entrenched in power in Tehran, while the reform movement has lost it momentum. The notion that the Iranians are going to arise *en masse* against the clerics is another neoconservative fantasy—one, however, that is not shared by Pollack.

Kenneth Pollack, finally, is opposed to the policy of replaying the invasion of Iraq in terms of Iran, arguing that "the threat of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons" does not justify "what would be an extremely costly and risky invasion," owing to the country's considerable size and inhospitable terrain and to the certain hostility offered by the Iranians toward their occupiers. So, if the United States lacks the necessary diplomatic and military power to achieve "regime change" in Iran, perhaps the United States should attempt to engage Tehran. An anticommunist Republican administration led by President Richard Nixon initiated the famous opening to China at a time when that country was ruled by an anti-American dictator in the midst of the Cultural Revolution. Why shouldn't the nationalist Republican administration headed by George W. Bush move in a similar direction with respect to the anti-American clerics in Tehran?

The opening of China, after all, was based on cold consideration of *Realpolitik*: The United States and China shared a common interest in containing an aggressive Soviet Union in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Today, the United States and Iran together have achieved the common goals of ousting from power the Taliban in Afghanistan and getting rid of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. The United States could benefit from an Iran engaged in helping to stabilize those two countries—Iraq, especially, where the Iranians' coreligionist Shiites are now in power. Iran would clearly like to see a friendly and stable Iraq emerging on her borders, while ensuring that the American military presence there and in Afghanistan would not be directed against her. That the conservatives are now in full control in Tehran makes it more likely still that the government would be able to deliver a deal with the Americans. A more "moderate" leadership in Iran would have been attacked by the conservatives for trying to mend diplomatic ties with the "Great Satan." Should President Bush then go to Iran?

In one of his more incisive observations, Pollack criticizes Bush for failing to take advantage of the serious opportunity for breakthrough with Iran that existed between September 11 and the Iraq war. Pollack notes that both countries concurred in seeing the Taliban as a threat and cooperated to oust it from Afghanistan; and, for the first time, U.S. and Iranian officials met face-to-face at conferences in Geneva. The Americans were low-key in their approach, however, and, in early 2002—just as things "were starting to really get interesting," as an inside source put it to Pollack—Bush delivered his State of the Union address branding Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as the "Axis of Evil." The Geneva talks ended, and Iran's nuclear program accelerated. Since then, influenced by neoconservative ideologues such as David Frum, the Bush administration continually accuses Iran of trying to destabilize Iraq and backing the insurgents there. In fact, close diplomatic, economic, and military ties have been forged between Baghdad and Tehran, while the two Shiite-ruled governments are as interested as the Americans are in beating the Sunni-led insurgency (whose members include many jihadists from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, those two great "allies" of the United States).

Moreover, Pollack the *Realpolitik* strategist is forced to concede that Iran's attempt to acquire nuclear military capability is neither "irrational" nor an outgrowth of the religious fanaticism or xenophobia of the ayatollahs in Tehran. It was the pro-American shah who started the Iranian nuclear program that is backed by the majority of Iranians today, including the Westernized secular-minded reformers. And why should it not be? From the perspective of an Iranian nationalist, acquiring nuclear military capacity makes a lot of sense, especially if you take into consideration that two of Iran's unfriendly neighbors, Israel and Pakistan, enjoy it; and another (Saddam's Iraq) almost had it at one time; and yet another neighbor of sorts, the United States, which controls Iraq, could use her nuclear might to force a "regime change" in Tehran. Pollack the ideologue, however, assuming America's "good intentions" and her benign hegemonism, insists that the United States "must address Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons."

Pollack fails to provide an outline of any clear strategy to ensure that Iran remains without a nuclear capacity. He admits that most of the available policy choices, including diplomatic pressure and economic sanctions, cannot work. He seems to back what he sees as a carrot-and-stick approach, by which the United States and the European Union offer Iran rewards if she backs away from her nuclear-arms program and penalties if she refuses to do so, which she probably will. And after that? Pollack, believing that a preemptive military strike on Iran's nuclear weapons could not work, concludes that the United States would have no choice but to learn to live with a nuclear-armed Iran and employ the policy of containment to deal with what amounts to a "threat" mainly so long as Washington continues to pursue a hegemonic policy in the Middle East, either through the neoconservative version of empire or Pollack's preferred "Empire Lite." In the absence of such a policy, the nuclear might of Israel, the Jewish Republic, should be able to deter the Islamic Republic with her nuclear arsenal. The system of Mutual Assured Destruction seems to be working quite effectively in the relationship between Hindus and Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Why don't we try the same in the Middle East?

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Out of Harm's Way

by Paul Gottfried

Bertrand de Jouvenel: The Conservative Liberal and the Illusions of Modernity
by Daniel J. Mahoney
Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute; 216 pp., $25.00

◆

In this factually and conceptually rich biography of French political thinker Bertrand de Jouvenel (1903-1987), Daniel J. Mahoney has at least begun the task that he sets for himself in the Preface: performing an "act of intellectual recovery" to "rectify the unwarranted neglect of one of the most thoughtful and most humane political thinkers of the previous century." Perhaps it seems strange to describe a figure who long graced the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences at the University of Paris; lectured at Yale, Berkeley, Cambridge, and Oxford; wrote regularly in the French press; and produced such widely praised tomes as *On Power*, *Sovereignty: An Inquiry Into the Political Good*, *The Pure Theory of Politics*, and *Marx et Engels: La longue marche* as someone who is now "largely unknown in fashionable intellectual circles."

Mahoney is right on this point, however. Although an astute critic of the managerial state and a once-known critic of economic redistribution, Jouvenel, as Mahoney observes, finds less and less recognition among French neoliberals, outside of the maverick editorial boards of *Commentaire* and *Futuribles*. Although France's most systematic and prolific 20th-century liberal (in the classical sense) commentator—one, moreover, equipped with an accessible and even elegant prose style—Jouvenel has to all appearances lost his popularity. *Sovereignty* impressed me deeply the first time through. On rereading the book, I realized more clearly how far into the medieval past Jouvenel reaches in search of "makeweights" against centralized power. If he is a bourgeois (as opposed to an egalitarian) liberal, much of the anchoring for his critical position looks distinctly premodern, even aristocratic. Jouvenel has no problem holding up grizzled feudal warriors as once-useful checks on early-modern political bureaucracy. But Mahoney may exaggerate his luminous Catholic faith, which rarely shines through his discussions of power and the means of counterbalancing it. There is no cause to follow Mahoney's lead by ascribing Jouvenel's comments on willfulness in the sovereign (in *Sovereignty*, Part Three) to "the Catholic critique of the sovereign will," as the same critique would have been available to Jouvenel from multiple other sources. (Though baptized a Catholic, he had, besides a Jewish mother, a Dreyfusard aristocratic French father, from whose politics one must infer that Jouvenel *père* was an ardent anticlerical.)

Jouvenel stands in the tradition of other French thinkers who, while not ecclesiastically oriented or much influenced by Catholic doctrines, were concerned nevertheless with checks on power (*e.g.*, Montesquieu and Benjamin Constant); nonetheless, he is clearly distinguishable from anti-Catholic liberals (though not from Tocqueville, as Mahoney reminds us, insofar as he looks to ecclesiastical institutions to place limits on the "democratic" state).

Although Jouvenel wrote much that is admirable, at least one aspect of his legacy is objectionable. Mahoney addresses this aspect, while leaving other questions unanswered. Jouvenel, to put it mildly, was a loose cannon politically. After a diatribe (in *Sovereignty*) against the modern bureaucratic state (which I happily endorse), Jouvenel opines that he finds it odd that American judges, citing an 18th-century document, were allowed to retard the New Deal. Mahoney reminds us that Jouvenel, admiring Franklin D. Roosevelt "profoundly," considered that FDR's "social experiments" actually had not gone far enough. Yet, in 1936, Jouvenel had thrown support behind political adventurer Jacques Doriot and Doriot's Parti populaire français. Although Mahoney may go too far in describing Doriot as having been, at the time, a "rightist demagogue" and the head of an "extremist" party, he was, in any case, an impetuous traveler *en route* from the Communist Party to what eventually became a Nazi front organization. And, what is weirder than weird, Jouvenel became an enthusiastic backer of the *soixante-huitards* would-be revolutionaries who tried to bring down the French state in 1968, publishing his sentiments in French newspapers (usually in the context of blasting De Gaulle). Although it is not ordinarily the case that *les extrêmes se touchent*, or that rightists and leftists are interchangeable, Jouvenel, in his public life—though not in the bulk of his scholarship—may have been an exception.

Mahoney, who never hides these embarrassments, explicitly notes that the "sympathetic student of Jouvenel is torn between profound admiration for the wise and humane political philosopher and unavoidable discomfort with the poor practical judgment that he regularly displayed in the opening and closing periods of his intellectual career." Mahoney tries to deal with the problem either by making Jouvenel into some kind of Catholic democrat or by offering a meticulous refutation of Jouvenel's fiercest critics, who have accomplished their worst by dishonestly taking liberties with certain of his statements. Mahoney follows this second strategy to brilliant effect—for example, when he goes after Jean-François Revel for misrepresenting Jouvenel's alleged Marxist sympathies, supposedly discernible in his book *Marx et Engels*. Mahoney finds little evidence to support the charge in Jouvenel's generally critical treatment of Marxism and observes (in a footnote) the "surprise" registered by Jouvenel's friends at his identification of himself with the left.

An explanation that Mahoney does not consider sufficiently is that Jouvenel, like many other intellectuals, began to mimic the left for purposes of self-protection, as Western societies veered sharply leftward in the middle and late 60's. Generally, this was a measure employed by people with far-right histories (*e.g.*, Heidegger, who attempted to cover up his collaboration with the Nazis partly by becoming a forerunner of the Greens and an opponent of the Cold War) or by those seeking leftist respectability while adhering to reactionary ideas. (Thus, the anti-Enlightenment communitarian Alasdair MacIntyre pays unsettling homage to feminism in presenting his recognizably neomedieval social and moral conceptions.) Jouvenel might well have followed this pattern of concealment, given the fact of his early sojourn on the right and his later reputation as an antileftist political theorist. Although equally wise thinkers have expressed more foolish political views, what distinguishes Jouvenel is the glaring disconnect between his political theory and his eventual support for

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radical redistribution and revolutionary egalitarianism. In each case, he was operating from radically different premises and concerns. Circumstances lead me to suspect that the closing, if not the opening, phase of Jouvenel's political life may have been driven by a search to get out of harm's way.

Contributing editor Paul Gottfried is the author of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt.

Britain's Liberal Legacy

by Derek Turner

In Defence of the Realm
by David Conway
Ashgate: Aldershot; 218 pp., £45

◆

One can easily imagine meeting David Conway in the company of Adam Smith or David Hume—an historical conceit that would please him. A quietly spoken, formidably intelligent philosophy professor, he is a senior research fellow at Civitas, the think tank that grew out of the Institute for Economic Affairs—and a very agreeable lunch companion, as I discovered when I interviewed him for *Right Now!* late last year.

Conway's previous books include *A Farewell to Marx: An Outline and Appraisal of His Theories* (1987), *Classical Liberalism: The Unvanquished Ideal* (1995), and *The Rediscovery of Wisdom: From Here to Antiquity in Search of Sophia* (2000). His latest book is a closely argued, carefully expressed defense not just of the Anglo-Saxon-derived nation-state but of classical liberalism, for him the acme of possible politico-economic organization and the indispensable prerequisite for national cohesion and international harmony.

Conway is alive to the complexities of the word *liberal*. Although it has become almost a term of abuse in the United States, in the United Kingdom, it retains some of its traditional meaning of generosity and tolerance and is accordingly laid claim to by most politicians and opinion-formers (many of whom would seem to be in receipt of stolen goods).

Accordingly, Chapter 1 ("Towards the recovery of liberal vision") is a painstaking definition of various kinds of liberalism. Conway distinguishes between "political liberalism" (*e.g.*, Rawls), "cosmopolitan liberalism" (*e.g.*, Dummett), two kinds of "liberal culturalism" (by which he means multiculturalism), "*modus vivendi*" liberalism (*e.g.*, John Gray), and different types of libertarianism. These variants, Conway believes, are fatally flawed by the lack of accommodation they offer to any concept of the divine.

Conway's earlier attempt to appropriate the tatterdemalion mantle of "equality" appears to demonstrate a lack of understanding that equality is incompatible with true liberty. Actually, all Conway means by equality in this context is that "every human being enjoys an equal moral standing—that is, all possess an identical set of basic moral rights." Yet this term has so many other less pleasing connotations that it might have been better had he avoided its use altogether or simply stated that he believes in equality before the law.

Conway is inherently suspicious of all forms of corporatism, including Catholicism, and sees (quite correctly) in the European Union a communitarian integralism inimical to both individualism and national identities. He has little time for those who are opposed to globalization or who distrust big business:

> Such Americanization as globalisation is likely to bring in its wake is unlikely to be anything other than benign, provided America remains true to the biblical ideals and values on which it was originally founded.

His subordinate clause neatly differentiates his views from those of many American neoconservatives, for whom conservatism consists of "consumer choice." Nor does Conway believe in bombing those who do not want to follow the Anglo-American model. On the contrary, he closes his book with the famous quotation from Micah 4: "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Naturally, he strongly opposes the overblown, politically correct, permanent bureaucracies beloved of so many American neoconservatives.

Conway feels that classical liberalism is essentially divinely inspired. Although *In Defence of the Realm* is academic in its style (albeit lucidly written and cogently argued), it is inspired by a passionate conviction that the best hope for the world is the widest possible expansion of classical liberalism, underpinned by his own (Jewish) religious sensibility. For him, the origins of classical liberalism lie mostly in Judaism. To support this idea, he cites Cecil Roth, author of a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* (1938):

> The Hebrew Monarchy came into existence under the influence of a conception, to be found nowhere else in antiquity, which regarded the constitution as the result of a tripartite agreement, or covenant, between the People, the ruler, and the Deity . . . [Because] the Deity is the embodiment of justice and righteousness it follows that the monarchy is dependent on the maintenance, not only of certain religious, but also of human values.

Roth believed, as does Conway, that this idealism was transferred to Britain by rulers and visionaries who read the Old Testament assiduously and sought to refashion Britain in emulation of the ancient Israelites. English visionaries imbued with Old Testament ambience learned to see England as similar to ancient Israel, "a divinely elect nation surrounded by idolatrous pagans"—a self-image aided by geography and history. These post-Reformation ideals were reinforced by Britain's subsequent commercial development as a globally trading empire, whose swashbuckling merchant-adventurers gradually metamorphosed into the "nation of shopkeepers" underestimated so disastrously by Napoleon (and Hitler). Other European Protestant nations, such as Sweden, were not affected by classical liberalism to the same degree, largely because of their different trading histories, which inclined them to look more toward Europe than to the open seas and new frontiers. The British qualities Conway so admires were eventually exported with the Anglo-Saxon diaspora to the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere; and so his patriotic solicitude accordingly extends around the globe.

Today, Britain is the classical-liberal state *par excellence* so far as Conway is concerned, a kind of quiet Utopia where

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pragmatism and idealism are coregents. His vision of Britain is, at times, almost Miltonian; *In Defence of the Realm* includes long excerpts from such Protestant thinkers as the 18th-century Unitarian minister Richard Price and a final chapter eye-catchingly entitled "Thinking of England, New England and other holy places." Yet the classical-liberal legacy is increasingly under threat in Britain, through multiculturalism, European integration, and the Blairite program of "modernization," which has seen Britain's institutions further undermined. Disintegrative, centrifugal pressures are at work, Conway knows, within all Anglophone countries, and within Israel.

Mass immigration and radical Islam pose potential challenges to classical-liberal values, urges Conway, yet he hopes these can be overcome by appropriate promotion of national public cultures, to which all immigrants would be expected to adhere (whatever their private cultures may be). Yet because of the scale of recent demographic changes, he seems to feel a little unsure on this score; as he said to me, "We must hope that the Anglo-Saxon cultural imprint can be transmitted onwards to non-Anglo-Saxons. In some respects, if that's not the case, we're doomed."

Traditional conservatives will find much to agree with in this book, especially in Chapter 2, in which Conway discusses the threats faced by both classical liberalism and the Anglo-Saxon nation-state. They will admire his intrepid, if carefully phrased, criticism of mass immigration:

> Given the current scale in which immigrants have entered Western liberal democracies from countries with radically different cultures, it may be doubted whether current opposition to such immigration is motivated more by racism and xenophobia than by legitimate concerns for social cohesion and for the survival of the national culture of the host society.

They will share his detestation of "anti-national cosmopolitanism," which Conway describes aptly as "a mindset primarily found among educated Westerners who purport to find their grounds for it in the very liberal ideas and ideals of which, in reality, it is so deeply subversive." They will applaud his well-aimed broadsides against such atrocities as affirmative action, tendentious political activism dressed up as Blairite "citizenship" programs, and the "systematic deracination" of Westerners brought about through the media and indoctrination in schools. They will be gratified by his citations of such overlooked thinkers as Sir Arthur Bryant, his defiantly antimodern belief in the existence of "national characters" and the efficacy of the hereditary House of Lords (now, sadly, a strictly academic discussion in the United Kingdom), his vast erudition, his open-mindedness, and his willingness to believe the best of others (which latter traits are not especially widespread among most of those who call themselves liberals).

Yet they will find as well things with which to disagree. Classical liberalism, while it is often congruent with conservatism, is not the same as conservatism—and the alliances the two camps make are often uneasy. The Thatcher governments, for example, were marked by a kind of schizophrenia, in which debased Whiggism warred constantly with populist nationalism and paternalistic High Toryism.

In Defence of the Realm ignores the roles played, or possibly played, in the formation of British national identity by such factors as Celtic paganism (which itself placed considerable emphasis on individual freedom), Greek and Roman philosophies and conceptions of government, and pre-Protestant "liberalizing" initiatives such as Magna Carta and Simon de Montfort's first English parliament. Conway almost entirely avoids discussing what he called in his *Right Now!* interview "the subtle links between genetics and culture"—although there is a sympathetic and detailed discussion of what he terms, in the present work, the "strangely neglected" writings of William McDougall.

Approbation, or disapprobation, of *In Defence of the Realm* will also be partly a matter of individual personalities. Many people of a conservative bent, especially if they are Catholics or High Anglicans, will not especially relish reading perfervid rhetoricians such as the aforementioned Richard Price, who, it should be remembered, was a fervent supporter not only of the American but of the French Revolution, for which he was famously denounced by Burke—which denunciation Conway views as unjust. Those of us who are uncomfortable with Manichaeism, whose nationalism is more visceral than ideological, and whose historical sympathies are engaged by orthodoxy more than nonconformism, kings more than parliaments, Stuarts more than Hanoverians, Tories more than Whigs, and (in the case of American readers) the South more than the North, will probably find the classical liberal eschatology a little dry—even as we recognize the good things it contains, while honoring the motivations of scholars such as David Conway, who give the other 99.99 percent of liberals a good name.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

Lessons From Experience

by Thomas Fleming

The Hunt for Confederate Gold
by Thomas Moore
Alexandria, VA: Fusilier Books;
318 pp., $17.50

◆

Consider these two premises: First, in 1865, the Confederacy is collapsing, and President Davis, concerned about the funds in the treasury, sends a young naval officer out on a wild expedition to hide the gold, to be used some day to help the South.

Second, in 2005, knowledge of the whereabouts of the hidden gold comes into the possession of a young descendant of the naval officer, and the members of a "neoconfederate" society known as the Fellowship of the South are determined to keep the gold and put it to its intended purpose, but first they have to frustrate the schemes of federal agents.

If this sounds like the plot outline of a cheap thriller, that would be half right. *The Hunt for Confederate Gold* is a thriller with many familiar elements: an alienated hero who only finds himself in accomplishing his mission; a stubborn young woman who challenges his assumptions before joining the crusade; a crusty old scholar of the Old School who just happens to possess the encyclopedic knowledge necessary to put key pieces of an historical puzzle together; a power-crazed federal agent so obsessed with his own

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virtue that he is happy to trample on the Bill of Rights and destroy the lives of ordinary people. H. Rider Haggard meets Dean Koontz.

As a novel, *Hunt* is little more than a good read for a weekend at the beach. Indeed, Thomas Moore's first piece of fiction is not without flaws. The opening scenes in Richmond are as stilted and stiff as a Civil War pageant; yet, though some readers might be tempted to put down the book after reading a few pages, the story picks up very quickly when we come to the present. And, to be fair to the author, later historical scenes portraying the heroic effort to hide the gold are absorbing, and the young officer, Edmond Marchand, is the incarnation of a gallant Southern officer.

The collateral descendant of Marchand (Moore's protagonist), George Trenholm Bolitho—inevitably nicknamed "Bo"—is his counterpart in the New South. Also a brave and honorable officer, Bo served in both Iraq wars, but, unable to stomach the brutal campaign against Iraqi civilians, he has not reenlisted and has gone back to South Carolina to study Southern history at the University of South Carolina. While Marchand knew that his duty was to his country, Bo no longer knows what his country is, though he is not ready to subscribe to the Southern nationalist views of his brilliant professor, Parker Hastie.

Simultaneously, Bo (without knowing what he is doing) embarks on the hunt by attempting to decode a message in an old family Bible, and Professor Hastie becomes the target of a campaign to destroy his career so sinister and low-minded it might have been orchestrated by Morris Dees, who by now has Thomas Moore fixed in the sights of his character-assassinating rifle.

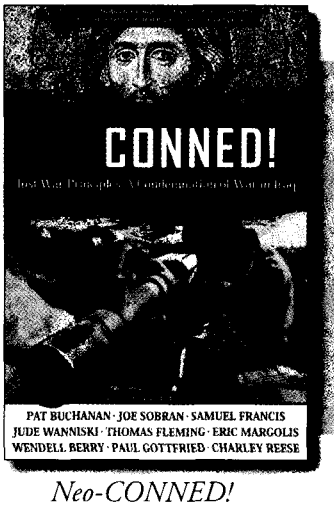
I shall not do any more to spoil the plot of this engaging thriller, and, if it were only a thriller, I would not be taking the trouble to review it. If you held your nose and sat through the Nicholas Cage vehicle *National Treasure*, then you should buy *Hunt* and see what a ripping yarn can be made on the theme of a search for lost treasure.

Though the rhetoric only occasionally gets in the way of the story, *Hunt* is as much a piece of political analysis as it is fiction. To some extent, it can be read as a fictional commentary on Clyde Wilson's seminal essay, "Republic or Empire?" It is not "neoconfederates," agrarians, pro-life protestors, and "Minutemen" in the West who are out of control, but the miniscule political class that puts congressmen and presidents into office and controls their every action—the people who tell Karl Rove what to tell George W. Bush.

If *Hunt* had been written by the usual neurotic housewife or gun-nut brownshirt, I probably would not have opened the pages. But Tom Moore has spent most of his life as an impeccable conservative Republican. A Citadel graduate, a Pentagon official in the Reagan administration, professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and a former director of defense and foreign-policy studies at the Heritage Foundation, Moore has done his best as a patriotic American to serve his country and to work within the system. His melancholy conclusions about the state of the Union are the lessons of experience, not the ravings of a disgruntled loner.

Any American who wants to repair the system we have or find a workable substitute will want to read *The Hunt for Confederate Gold*.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of Chronicles *and the author, most recently, of* The Morality of Everyday Life.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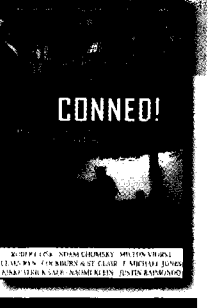

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by Scott P. Richert

Revitalizing Rockford

In January, this column will celebrate its fifth anniversary. When Tom Fleming and I originally conceived of the idea back in 1998 (as an occasional "Letter From Rockford" to be written by various local activists), we were capitalizing on the fact that our city was considered by marketing agencies and national chains as an ideal testing ground, because, demographically—on questions of race, income, education, *etc.*—Rockford represented the national averages.

Seven years later, that is no longer true—minorities make up a greater percentage of the population than they do in the nation as a whole; average income is slightly lower (depending on which statistics you believe); educational levels have slipped. It is too early to tell whether these trends are harbingers of America's future direction, but one thing is clear: Economically, Rockford is still forecasting America's future.

For a city of 150,000 people, a solid economic base requires that income flow in from the outside. In this respect, the frenzy of commercial development on the east side of town over the past 20 years has actually decreased Rockford's economic viability, not increased it. The lion's share of every dollar spent at a national chain, such as Wal-Mart, leaves the local economy, never to return—unless, of course, it returns in the form of another local Wal-Mart Supercenter. Rockford will soon have five, positioned strategically around the city, pumping money out of the local economy and funneling it to Bentonville, Arkansas, and China—any place but here.

Contrary to the belief of government planners in both parties, sales-tax revenue, by itself, is not an accurate measure of economic health. Far more telling are such statistics as average household income (essentially flat over the last 30 years in inflation-adjusted dollars); average hours worked per household (up about 50 percent during the same period); bankruptcies (setting new records almost every month, both locally and nationally); savings rates (near the lowest point in the history of the United States); mortgage debt (at record levels, spurred on by low- and no-cost loans and reverse mortgages, which suck the equity out from under senior citizens and break the ties between generations by ensuring that the family house cannot be passed down to the children); and credit-card debt (rising every month, as even such venerable financial institutions as Chase Manhattan offer vast credit lines to people they would not have dreamed of servicing ten years ago).

That last fact is very important, because it shows the ultimate hollowness of the consumer economy. According to CardWeb.com Inc. (*www.cardweb.com*), average household credit-card debt in 2004 was $9,312, up 29 percent since 1998, when the most recent dramatic decline in manufacturing employment began. That's almost $700 billion in outstanding credit-card debt. So while both the Clinton and Bush administrations have done little or nothing to arrest the decline of American manufacturing, we have been financing our consumption with one of the most expensive forms of debt, and that money that we never had in the first place has been leaving our communities—and some portion of it has gone to finance the expansion of "American" manufacturing in China, furthering the death spiral.

The service-economy model that was supposed to replace manufacturing has similar problems—it only increases the economic health of a community if it brings in money from outside. But service-industry execs, like their counterparts in multinational manufacturing concerns, are always looking for ways to decrease costs, and thus it was almost inevitable that such things as call centers—which did bring money into local economies—would be outsourced.

Tourism is a form of the service economy that, by definition, cannot be outsourced, and it can benefit local economies, but it only works for areas that are attractive as tourist destinations. Rockford may be a pleasant place to live, but it is Pollyannish to believe that it is more desirable as a tourist destination than similar cities of its size throughout the Midwest. Indeed, it is less desirable than, for instance, Midwestern cities on the shores of the Great Lakes. And the economic potential of tourism to Rockford is further undercut by the fact that most of the tourists who do come here stay out in the great Wasteland on the eastern edge of town, just off the tollway. While the chain hotels and restaurants out there generate sales-tax revenue, they do not generate much money that will stay in the local economy and, thus, cannot form a solid economic base for the city's future.

And so, for better or worse, the economic health of Rockford has to be tied to businesses that bring money into the city by exporting products out. That does not necessarily mean manufactured goods—software, for instance, is an exportable product—but manufactured goods have been, and still remain, the lifeblood of this community. While it may be true that, strictly in terms of dollars, healthcare and public education today "contribute" more to Rockford's economy than manufacturing does, those are sterile "industries." G.K. Chesterton was right when he said that we cannot all make a living taking in each other's laundry, and that is even more true of warehousing children in public schools or treating each other's ailments, real or imagined.

And so we come back to production—good old-fashioned, as in many of the factories around town, or new-fangled and high-tech, such as the techniques being developed at the EigerLab (a research and development center in Rockford funded with both public and private funds). Even today, as manufacturing in Rockford begins to rise back up out of the recent economic downturn, 23 percent of Rockfordians are employed in manufacturing. Another 23 percent hold jobs that are dependent upon local manufacturers. In other words, the economic fate of almost half of the population of

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Aaron D Wolf

A factory worker programs a machine at Rockford Acromatic.

Rockford is tied to manufacturing. That's far more people than those whose livelihood is dependent on healthcare, education, or tourism. If Rockford is to survive, the decline in manufacturing needs to be arrested, and positive steps need to be taken to increase manufacturing employment in Rockford.

That, of course, is easier said than done. But there are signs of hope. Perhaps most significant among them is the Manufacturers Alliance of the Rock River Valley (MARRV). Small manufacturers, like most small businessmen, have traditionally been an independent bunch. They haven't necessarily viewed themselves in competition with their fellow manufacturers in Rockford—though too often they have—but they are used to being solely responsible for the success or failure of their own business. And if the current manufacturing crisis has taught us anything, it's that this mind-set needs to change.

MARRV is a big step in the right direction. So far, over 40 local small manufacturers have come together to form a flexible network. Large manufacturers from outside the area, who are outsourcing more and more of their component production, now have one point of contact in Rockford that can help them find the right small manufacturer—or several small manufacturers—to fill their needs. And manufacturers who are members of MARRV do not need to worry about being unable to fulfill a customer's request and possibly losing that customer as a result—they can turn to their fellow members as backup.

If this sounds a bit like a Frank Capra movie, well, all the better. Talking to such local manufacturers as Bob Trojan and Teresa Beach-Shelow and Mike Molander and Char Vincer, all of whom have been indispensable in getting MARRV off the ground, it is possible to believe that Frank Capra is alive and well. In their mouths, "cooperation" and "collaboration" and "combining resources" and "helping each other out" become more than buzzwords: They represent an older morality—a better morality—that disappeared long ago from the boardrooms and corporate offices of all-too-many large manufacturers who are now American in name only.

But for small manufacturers—locally owned companies, often family-owned and operated—this remains a way of life. And there is an increasing realization—among manufacturers themselves, among politicians, among those who live in cities such as Rockford—that manufacturing is not a monolith. Publicly held, multinational corporations have a different set of priorities—a different morality—from the small manufacturers who make up the economic backbone of Rockford.

The problem in American manufacturing is not simply foreign competition. NAFTA, GATT, WTO, permanent normal trading relations with China—all of these came at the tail end of one of the most extensive periods of mergers, acquisitions, and centralization in the history of American industry. And those mergers were driven by an obsession among corporate leaders with quarterly profit-and-loss statements that overshadows any other concern, including questions of national security and the well-being of their fellow Americans (their workers, their workers' families, and the small manufacturers further down the production line).

The prosperity of America in the 20th century was built not on General Motors and Ford and Chrysler and General Dynamics but on the small manufacturers, often with 100 employees or less, who provided the lion's share of manufacturing employment in this country—like such local companies as Rockford Acromatic and AutoMeter and Rockford Linear Actuation and LJ Fabricators and Dial Machine and the 40-plus companies that make up MARRV.

At one time, the interests of large manufacturers largely coincided with those of small manufacturers, but with the increasing mobility of capital and labor, their interests have now diverged. Corporate tax law, trade agreements, and even environmental and healthcare regulations have been structured to benefit large manufacturers—especially those who have the ability to move offshore and who have the resources to fund congressional and presidential campaigns.

Organizations such as MARRV represent one way of leveling the playing field. But we have to pursue a multipronged approach. We need federal tax reform that removes barriers to American competitiveness, such as the border-adjusted value-added tax that Rockford Institute board chairman David Hartman has proposed. (See "America for Sale" and "Taxation for Economic Survival" in the November and December 2004 issues of *Chronicles*.) We need to reduce taxes and regulatory burdens here in Illinois, so that Rockford can compete effectively with other cities in the United States. We need better schools, so that children in Rockford will be equipped with the skills and critical thinking necessary for modern manufacturing. We need local political leaders who understand that the economic health of this community depends on its manufacturing base. And we need citizens who once again take pride in Rockford's role as a manufacturing center and who stop steering their children away from manufacturing as a career—and stop encouraging the best and brightest of the next generation to move away from their hometown.

America's prosperity was built on manufacturing, and Rockford's was as well. Our downtown was built upon a manufacturing base—and it can be rebuilt upon a revitalized manufacturing sector. Our park system, of which we are justifiably proud, was a legacy of our industry. Our river played an important role in the growth of manufacturing in Rockford, and the converted factories along its banks should serve as a constant reminder of what Rockford once was—and can be again.

Most importantly of all, manufacturing once formed the basis of Rockford as a community—of people bound together in a common cause, caring about the welfare of their neighbors and proud of their hometown. We don't need, in the words of an old, failed marketing slogan, "A different kind of greatness"—we can have the old greatness back. The small manufacturers of Rockford still have pride in their hometown. It's time the rest of us—here in Rockford, and across America—discovered it as well. ☙

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Letter From Alabama

by Michael Hill

Taking Down the Fiddle

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The 75th anniversary of the publication of *I'll Take My Stand* ought to cause traditionalist Southerners and other Americans to look closely not only at the current state of our society but at their own personal spheres of community, family, and church. The authors warned that the South was in danger of being snatched from its organic agrarian roots and given over to the artificial and contrived, if it accepted modern industrialism. Music is one of the areas deeply affected by the triumph of modern industrialism.

Andrew Nelson Lytle, one of the Twelve Southerners who contributed to ITMS, admonished his fellow Southerners in 1930 to "Throw out the radio and take down the fiddle from the wall." I live in a place that, perhaps unwittingly, has taken Lytle's sage advice for some four decades. The Shoals, a four-city area (population 63,000) in northwest Alabama, comprises Florence (on the north bank of the Tennessee River) and Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Muscle Shoals (on the south bank). It is a largely white but poor region set in a beautiful river valley bordered on the south by a range of hills and mountains along the Tennessee River Divide. Since the passage of NAFTA, the area has lost some 5,000 textile jobs, and the economic prospects of the Shoals are not favorable. Life has always been tough here for the Scots-Irish and those who settled here after them because of poor soil and rugged terrain. But the hard conditions have produced a character in the people that spills out into their music. It is rough, passionate, sweet as honey, sharp as vinegar. It can knock you down like a set of brass knuckles at a country juke joint. But it can also lift you up again like a choir of heavenly angels. Like the South, it is its own contradiction.

I am sure that, when Mr. Lytle admonished his readers to "take down the fiddle" and make their own music, he did not exactly have in mind the types of music—soul and R&B, rock and blues (in addition to bluegrass, country, and gospel)—that have come out of the Shoals. But those musical genres, like the traditional music of Lytle's South in the 1920's-1940's, come out of the folk traditions of the rural parts of Dixie. It is not the vapid, deracinated product of Los Angeles, New York, and even Nashville today; it is the story of real people—written, sung, and played by real people.

Having grown up in this rich and fertile musical setting in the 1950's and 60's, I could not wait to get back here after some 30 years in exile. Upon my return in the spring of 2003, I began to establish (and in some cases, reestablish) contact with the folks in the Shoals music community. My first was with famed Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section bass player David Hood. Hood, along with guitarist Jimmy Johnson, drummer Roger Hawkins, and keyboardist Barry Beckett, were immortalized as "the Swampers" in Lynyrd Skynyrd's anthem "Sweet Home Alabama" in the 1970's. Hood also is chairman of the Muscle Shoals Music Association (MSMA) and currently plays bass with The Decoys, a local five-piece group.

My contact with Hood and the MSMA gave me an opening into the Shoals' still-vibrant and vital music scene. Though things have certainly changed since the 1960's and early 70's when the likes of Aretha Franklin, Percy Sledge, Wilson Pickett, Bob Dylan, and the Rolling Stones could be seen on Jackson Highway and Avalon Street, there is still something truly special about the place and its music.

Understand this: Though there are many "stars" in the musical constellation hereabouts, this ain't Hollywood or New York City. These folks are approachable and often quite humble, considering many of them are recognized worldwide by name (if not by face) as the creators of something known and revered as the "Muscle Shoals Sound." I am sure that a young Van Morrison, way over in Ireland, would have swum the ocean to have been in the Shoals in 1965 instead of listening on European radio to the soul and R&B hits coming out of northwest Alabama.

A recent event will illustrate my point. A local bar in Florence hosted a Hurricane Katrina relief jam on a Sunday afternoon and evening in mid-September. As I got out of my car in the overflowing parking lot, the first person I saw was Spooner Oldham, the legendary songwriter and keyboardist. Growing up in Center Star, Alabama, about six miles from where I live at present, Spooner collaborated with Dan Penn (Pennington, of the Pennington clan of Lamar County, Alabama, which makes him my distant cousin) on such soul classics as "I'm Your Puppet" and "Out of Left Field."

Upon entering the crowded bar, I literally ran into Scott Boyer, lead singer and guitarist for The Decoys, scheduled to play a set that afternoon. Scott had founded a Southern rock band back in the 70's called Cowboy, toured and recorded with Gregg Allman, and penned a hit song for Eric Clapton entitled "Please Be With Me." To describe The Decoys as merely a "local band" is to give the impression that they are small-time. Everyone and every band must be from somewhere, however. This reminds me of when I was at the Atlanta Pop Festival in July 1970 and explained to a fellow from New Mexico that the group taking the stage was a "local band" from Macon—the Allman Brothers. He was amazed that a bunch of local boys could be so good!

The Decoys are another local band from the Shoals. Besides Scott Boyer and David Hood, the band lines up with Kelvin Holley (the Little Richard Band, Bobby "Blue" Bland, and The Amazing Rhythm Aces) on lead guitar, one of the most incredible players I've ever seen live; N.C. Thurmond (Percy Sledge, Gregg Allman, and Hank Williams, Jr.) on keys; and Mike Dillon on drums. On this particular day, The Decoys played a crisp 45-minute set of both originals and covers and then backed acclaimed Shoals performer Donnie Fritts on some of his tunes. Besides being a terrific songwriter for the likes of Ray Charles, Charlie Rich, Waylon Jennings, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dolly Parton, and The Box Tops—and one of the original movers and shakers in the Shoals music scene (along with Rick Hall of FAME studios, Billy Sherrill, Norbert Putnam, Arthur Alexander, Jerry Carrigan, David Briggs, and Dan Penn)—Fritts co-starred in several 70's-era Sam Peckinpah movies, including a role (along with buddy Kris Kristofferson) as a motorcycle tough in the cult classic *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*.

Fritts, who stood and talked with Wayne Counts (of The Midnighters, and the best

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damn slide guitar player in town) and me before taking the stage, held forth on just how real and natural it was playing here and mixing with his friends, fans, and fellow musicians in such an informal manner.

The Shoals area has many events each year that bring the local musicians into close contact with their fans and friends. The world-famous W.C. Handy Blues Festival is an annual week-long celebration of north Alabama's rich musical heritage. Over the past three summers, I have had the pleasure of seeing (and occasionally being allowed to play with) some of the talented performers who grace the many stages throughout the area. One of the most loved and admired local bands is The Midnighters, a sextet that includes brothers Wayne (guitar) and James Counts (drums). Their business, Counts Brothers Music, is one of the favorite hangouts for local players in the Shoals. On a typical day, there is no telling whom you will see strolling into the place from the local music scene or from out of town. The Midnighters have been around now for over 15 years and play some of the best down-home soul and funky blues you would ever want to hear. Not only do the Counts Brothers hit the note at the local nightspots, but their store provides a crucial hub for musicians to meet and acquire the goods and services to keep them playing. And, by the way, all the fellows who work there are great players themselves, especially bassist extraordinaire Terry Richardson. Feel like playing? Just walk in and someone will surely oblige you.

The tight-knit Shoals music community benefits greatly from places like Counts Brothers Music in Muscle Shoals and Max's Music in Sheffield. The latter, owned and operated by local music legend Max Russell, is a Mecca for impromptu late-night jams and recording sessions by some of the Shoals' best pickers, including famed California transplant bass player and vocalist Tom "Pizza" Hillmeyer. The jams that happen at Max's and other venues best illustrate what Mr. Lytle meant when he advised Southerners to eschew "canned" entertainment and to make their own.

The creative genius of true "folk" music, as opposed to the antiseptic forms of popular music such as pop, hip-hop, rap, and heavy metal, among others, has always been found in the musicians' ability to work improvisations off of a skeletal framework. While some musicians make a career by recording three-minute songs in the studio and then duplicating them note for note, night after night, in live performances, this formula does not allow for the spark of creative genius that gave us, say, Duane Allman. Allman, the founder and leader of the Allman Brothers Band from 1969 to his untimely death in October 1971, was known for his brilliant, highly original extended guitar solos. Along with Jimi Hendrix, Allman was unquestionably one of the two most original electric guitarists of his period.

What Allman did for "rock" music can still be heard in the many late-night jam sessions in the Shoals, Memphis, Macon, and countless other places where the music communities pay homage to the old forms and structures of blues, jazz, R&B, and soul. On any given night, you can find several jams open to anyone who can play. There is no pretense, no professional jealously, no egotism—simply a celebration of the good music that permeates this place like hickory smoke does good pork barbecue. Hell, you might even find yourself jamming with Bobby Whitlock, keyboardist for Derek and the Dominos and coauthor of the classic-rock anthem "Layla."

The Shoals is but one small point on the map in today's burgeoning worldwide music scene. Though the glory days of the 1960's and 70's are well behind it now, this northwestern corner of Alabama still has some magic left, at least on certain warm, humid nights when the cicadas find themselves competing with the sweet notes of a blues guitar and vocals so deep and soulful that you'd swear they were oozing up from the mud of the Tennessee River. People here may not be familiar with Mr. Lytle's words, but you can bet they know the music.

Michael Hill is the president of the League of the South and writes from Killen, Alabama (in the Shoals).

Letter From Bogotá

by Brian Kirkpatrick

FARC Meets the Junior League

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Saturday afternoon, my sister-in-law, Carolina, called from Bogotá. She asked me how we were doing—repeatedly, the way her mother does—then she asked to speak to my wife. My wife wasn't home, so Carolina asked me to have her call, since "we have a little problem."

Carolina sounded fine, so I didn't understand why my wife looked worried when I gave her the message. "You don't know Carolina. She's always relaxed. If she says there's a little problem, it's serious."

My wife didn't reach Carolina until after church on Sunday. I was in and out of the room while she talked, so I didn't realize something was wrong. I saw her shake her hand, fingers together and palm down, but even that is ambiguous: She does it when she says she's embarrassed, too. I stopped what I was doing when I saw tears in her eyes.

My wife's older brother Oscar was supposed to go to my mother-in-law's house Tuesday night, but he hadn't shown up. The family could not locate him or his fiancée, that night or the next day. On Wednesday, my mother-in-law got an anonymous call: Oscar had been kidnapped. The family would receive instructions about a ransom, and, if they ever wanted to see him again, they would follow the instructions exactly. Over the next two days, they got more calls; twice, my mother-in-law talked to Oscar. He pleaded with her to follow the kidnappers' instructions. The family decided to keep my wife and me in the dark until that Saturday phone call—don't ask me why. When they finally called, they asked us to contribute to the ransom.

All of us thought, *Why Oscar?* He was the smartest, the best educated, the handsome one, the devout evangelical. He held the respect and affection of everyone in my wife's huge extended family.

Monday night, I hugged my wife as she prayed for Oscar. I whispered that she should pray for Oscar's fiancée as well. She did, briefly, then she started and jumped away from me, screaming. She said she had seen the face of Oscar's fiancée—it was white and bloated, like the face of a corpse.

Later that night, Carolina told us that the kidnappers had described a spot on the river where the police could find the body of Oscar's fiancée. Within 24 hours, the police found her body and that of another woman in plastic bags. Oscar's fiancée had two bullets in her head. My wife's vision had been correct. With what I thought great cruelty, the police said that Oscar's fiancée had been killed because my mother-in-law had contacted them. I told the family that wasn't true, that Oscar's fiancée was killed as a business move—to show that their threats were serious.

In order to raise the ransom, my father-

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in-law tried to sell a car and a house he rented out. We cabled the family more money than we could afford. My father-in-law instructed everyone not to talk to the police anymore and made the arrangements with the kidnappers himself. Then he drove into the mountains of Colombia at night with the equivalent of $40,000 in cash.

He was to meet the kidnappers at nine in an isolated spot. He told the family he would call by midnight. We didn't hear from him that night, or by seven o'clock the next morning when my wife talked to her sister. I didn't tell my wife, but I was sure he and Oscar were both dead.

After 18 hours of silence, Oscar and his father came home. The kidnappers had taken the ransom and my father-in-law's SUV, then held him for several hours to make sure the police hadn't followed him. After dawn, the kidnappers reunited Oscar and his father, and the two men walked out of the mountains—Oscar with a broken arm and bruises from a beating, my father-in-law puffing from emphysema in the thin air of the Andes. They walked for hours before they could hitch a ride.

Six months before the kidnapping, Oscar's factory and that of my father-in-law had been fire-bombed. A former employee that Oscar had fired for embezzling had nursed a grudge and persuaded his brother to help him commit arson. The police caught the former employee, but his brother was still free when Oscar disappeared. I had thought the same men were behind the kidnapping, but Oscar hadn't recognized them.

The problem with figuring out who kidnapped Oscar and killed his fiancée is that there are too many suspects. Bogotá averages six kidnappings per day. The culprits grabbed Oscar and his fiancée coming out of the movie theater, so they must have studied him for some time. FARC, one of Colombia's two communist guerilla movements, raises a lot of money through kidnappings, but they have a reputation for not harming their victims if the family cooperates.

After Oscar was released, he spent a night in the hospital, then, for ten days, he mostly stayed in his room, telling the same stories over and over whenever he ventured out. He said that his life was over and that he was going to sell his factory and go to work for someone so he wouldn't be the target of another kidnapping. A month after he got home, he started worrying about his employees and went back to work. It was a good sign that he cared, but he wasn't back to normal. He had lost his confidence—temporarily, we hoped.

The kidnapping took place in September. On Halloween night, Oscar was beaten, stripped, and left naked on an isolated back-country road. He had a depressed skull fracture, probably from a blow with the butt of a pistol. People passed him on the road, thinking him a drunk who had passed out on the wayside, while he bled and the swelling that came from his crushed skull began to compress his brainstem. He was within minutes of death when he finally arrived at a hospital.

With emergency surgery, Oscar survived. In the subsequent five months, he has moved from coma to an irritated confusion and a failure to recognize anyone, and on to a partial return of his memory. It is still early; we don't know how far back he will come. Before the injury, he ran his own, very successful business. Now we are waiting to see if he can even return to work. One neurosurgeon glibly reassured us that, because Oscar came out of the coma within 36 hours, "He'll get it all back." Maybe, but if that neurosurgeon is wrong, I plan to rub his nose in his smug prediction for the rest of his life.

While this was going on, I was negotiating over a possible job in the South. My prospective employers offered to pay for my wife's ticket and hotel on my second visit. My wife would spend a day looking at houses in the area and grilling the realtor about schools and neighborhoods, so picking the right realtor mattered.

Online, I found a woman who seemed to be a good candidate: a lifelong resident of the town, a recent Realtor of the Year. What I really liked, though, was a line about her community activities: former cochair of the United Way Campaign, member of the Symphony Society, former president of the YWCA—and former president of the Junior League.

The Junior League was a source of hilarity for my circle when I was a stupid teenager. I thought of them as overly proper Southern ladies with an interest in makeup, money, their fine family histories, and feeling superior to everyone else. To me, they were superficial ex-debutantes with kids and fading figures. I was wrong, as I was about most things then. The Junior League is a charitable organization, its members trying to improve their hometowns and alleviate suffering.

My wife and the realtor, separated by culture, language, and decades of age, hit it off. My wife is a charmer who has captivated people on three continents, but the realtor was also warm and genuine. My wife and stepdaughter were amazed by the woman's accent—it sounds like home to me—but they had a wonderful time with her. If we move there, she is likely to be one of my wife's good friends, as well as one of my stepdaughter's.

We will probably never know who kidnapped Oscar, killed his fiancée, or left him with his head injury. My view is, Colombia did it. Colombia has the last significant communist insurgency in South America because of the drug trade: There is so much money available that an otherwise irrelevant group of thugs can finance an army. In Colombia, kidnapping is good business, and the freelancers have learned their trade from the guerillas. Indirectly, then, drugs financed Oscar's kidnapping.

But now I think about Colombia's problems in a different way: There's not enough Junior League. In Colombia, the women are raising the third generation involved in FARC's war. In the United States, we still have a little of the Junior League. The League, the United Way, symphony societies, and other groups consisting largely of women who want to help other people are an immunization against FARC and all it represents. The Junior League is civilization.

Our rulers are doing their best to destroy the League, the Boy Scouts, the Rotary Club, and all the other remnants of civil society. Such organizations are pressured to become bastions of affirmative action; the churches, to become temples of secular humanism. The problem is that the voluntary nature of these groups is what makes them work. This destruction of our civilization makes FARC or some similar tragedy inevitable. Our government is breaking the bricks in the wall that keeps out the barbarians.

If we move to that other city, my wife, with her brown skin and accent, would be welcomed in the Junior League. She understands such women, and they understand and enjoy her. They think the same way. They all want to have men around who are like Oscar, and not like the animals in FARC. They want to be left alone, so they can civilize the little savages who are their children and turn them into decent men and women. They want to save the rest of us from the demons that torment Colombia.

Brian Kirkpatrick writes from Baltimore, Maryland.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

An Unsteady Empire

August 29, 2005, the day when hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, may have marked the beginning of the end of the American Empire. Four years after the horrors in New York and Washington, D.C., showed the nation's vulnerability to external attack, the Hobbesian free-for-all in New Orleans demonstrated just how fragile it is internally.

In that same week, four less widely reported events contributed to a shift in the global strategic equation: At Rotterdam's spot market, oil exceeded $70 per barrel for the first time; on China's Shandong Peninsula, Russia and China conducted a joint military exercise for the first time in history; the International Atomic Energy Agency issued a conciliatory report on Iran's nuclear program; and in Baghdad, the drafters of Iraq's new constitution declared "the fixed principles and rules of Islam" to be the basis of all future legislation.

On all four fronts, the American interest mandates the adoption of a new, essentially defensive, strategy.

Some wars or disasters have the capacity to create strong bonds among the American people and to enhance their sense of mutual solidarity. The devastation along the Gulf Coast will not be remembered as such an event. Many "lessons of Katrina" will be drawn by pundits and bureaucrats, but the most significant one is that America's inner cities are easily turned into lawless jungles.

The cause of the problem is not in the looters' alleged poverty. Sri Lanka is much poorer than New Orleans, yet, when the tsunami struck last December, the government and the Tamil Tiger guerrillas quickly agreed on a truce to enable rescuers to do their work unhindered. When Bombay was flooded last summer, the crime rate in India's largest city actually dropped—although most of its inhabitants live on $1,400 *per year*.

The problem is that the collective striving embodied in "We the People" makes no sense unless there is a definable "people" to support it. New Orleans shows that the absence of any sense of such kinship in today's America is not limited to American Indians and Muslim immigrants; it is also rampant within the African-American urban underclass.

The solution does exist, but it demands the reversal of four decades of an unholy alliance between America's elite class and her underclass against the rest of us. As Sam Francis has noted, we pay the taxes, do the work, suffer the crime, and endure political and cultural dispossession at the hands of the elite. The underclass, in the meantime, feels "empowered" to treat our laws, our institutions, and our morals as shackles to be thrown off at the first opportunity.

That much is now obvious to America's friends and foes alike. (As the Arab-language daily *Assennara* editorialized, Katrina "reminds us of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which revealed back then that the Soviet Union's shiny facade was rotten from the inside.") For that reason, it is to be feared that those who want to harm America will consider focusing their nefarious plans not on some shiny monument to capitalism but on the basics of infrastructure and public utilities in a major urban area with a large population of potential "objective" allies. It is therefore necessary to introduce federal legislation that will treat rioting and looting in time of emergency as a capital crime. For Homeland Security purposes, we must establish legal and operational precedents that can be applied quickly in case of a major terrorist attack or, indeed, any other emergency that may lead to a breakdown of law and order. It is also necessary to redirect the resources spent on Iraq to the improvement of the emergency-response and management mechanisms at all levels.

The immediate impact of Katrina on energy prices and the longer-term problem of the likely chronic shortage of oil demand an urgent response from the White House. America must not continue to depend on oil and natural gas, which are disproportionately found in some of the world's most volatile regions. The goal of diversifying energy supplies has to be treated as a national-security issue of the highest order. Some petroleum analysts are looking to the fourth quarter of 2005 as the moment at which all-time world oil production will peak—among them, author Matthew Simmons, who believes that Saudi Arabia has already peaked and "the odds are 95 percent" that the world has exceeded sustained peak oil production. Many Americans are unaware of the momentous nature of this event. Even with the new Caspian and Alaskan fields, overall production in 20 years' time will roughly correspond to that of 1985—but there will be twice as many people in the world, and the booming economies of China and India will additionally increase pressure on demand. Biofuels and other renewable resources are still expensive to exploit, but technological improvements have the potential to make them a viable alternative to fossil fuels, invulnerable to political instability.

Reducing dependence on oil is probably the clearest of all prerequisites for a viable national-security strategy. It is also necessary in view of the fact that a major global producer, Russia, and the second-largest consumer, China, are overcoming their old hostility in order to forge a common front against what they perceive as Washington's hegemony in Central Asia and the Far East. While the world needs to be multipolar in order to be normal, and America needs to cease being the hegemon in order to recover her identity, the realignment brings uncertainties and potential dangers. The American interest demands a pragmatic acceptance of the emerging redistribution of power in Asia and policies that will seek to manage, rather than resist, the emerging multipolar structure.

The change from the Soviet-era tension, and even open military confrontation, to global partnership in Sino-Russian relations is one of the most significant events of this decade. Potentially in the cards during the decade of unparalleled U.S. hegemony in the 1990's, it was accelerated by NATO's war against Serbia

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in 1999, which eroded the confidence each had in her ability to advance and protect her interests by exercising her veto at the U.N. Security Council. That confidence suffered a further blow when the United States and Great Britain attacked Iraq without explicit Security Council approval.

"Peace Mission 2005," the first joint military exercise launched by China and Russia, sent a signal that was not about military technology or training; it was, to quote the *Financial Times*, "another sign of Washington's waning political influence on the western shores of the Pacific." Russia is already by far China's most important arms supplier, and the two share other compatibilities. China needs Russian oil; both countries have a problem with separatist Islamic movements; and both reject any international interference. Both want to contain U.S. influence in Central Asia.

The challenge that this emerging alliance presents to the United States is more pressing than any other global issue except for the ever-present threat of *jihad*. The geopolitical equation demands the establishment of an alliance, informal or otherwise, between the United States and India, China's sole natural rival in Asia. The forging of a special relationship with Delhi is long overdue, quite apart from our relations with Beijing—India is a long-neglected natural ally in the "War on Terror"—but no such relationship can be effected for as long as Pakistan continues to be perceived in Washington as an essential strategic partner, which she is not.

Almost equally important is to de-escalate the tension caused by Iran's nuclear program. President Bush appeared to be in no mood to do so when, speaking on Israeli television last August, he said he was prepared to use force to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. His language reflected a concern and an agenda. The concern is Washington's view that the acquisition of those weapons by the government in Tehran would be injurious to the vital interests of the United States. The agenda, set by the neoconservatives years ago and summarized in Mr. Bush's inclusion of Iran in his "Axis of Evil," is to effect a regime change in Iran or else to neutralize it by military force as a meaningful factor in the regional equation. It takes the existence of an Iranian nuclear-weapons program for granted and asserts that there are only two things that will stop it: revolution from below or an attack on its nuclear facilities. The long-awaited revolution is not happening, however, which the promoters of this agenda take as proof that a preemptive attack is all the more urgent.

It must not happen. The consequences would be horrendous. A massive Shiite insurgency in southern Iraq would make the country utterly unmanageable. The rise of oil prices to well beyond $100 per barrel within days would trigger a worldwide recession. Tehran would have an incentive to support or even sponsor massive terrorist attacks against the United States. There would be a new crisis in trans-Atlantic relations, far deeper than the one over Iraq; and China and Russia would be drawn even closer together.

If Tehran is seeking nuclear weapons, it is only following in the footsteps of other regional powers—notably Israel, India, and Pakistan. In such an environment, its security concerns are real. It is surrounded by U.S. bases in Turkmenistan to the north, U.S. troops in Iraq to the west, and more U.S. troops in Afghanistan to the northeast. Its remaining neighbor, Pakistan, is armed with nuclear bombs, inherently unstable, and potentially hostile. The Arab world remained aloof when Iraq attacked in 1980. In such circumstances, it is easy to understand why Iran's rulers would desire an alternative deterrent. The notion that they would seek to threaten the United States with up to a half-dozen weapons that they may build over the next decade is silly. The mullahs are devious and dogmatic, but they are neither suicidal nor mad. There must be no "Operation Iranian Freedom," period.

Next door in Iraq, it is essential to develop an exit strategy and to withdraw, within a year at most. This will entail some unpleasant compromises. Addressing the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Utah on August 22, President Bush said he was confident that Iraqi negotiators would produce a constitution "that reflects the values and traditions of the Iraqi people." The problem is that those "values and traditions" include an agreement among the three communities that Islam is to be the foundation for all laws and that any proposal that contradicts Islamic religious teachings will be removed from the statute book in the new, democratic Iraq.

These principles are reported to have been approved by American diplomats in Baghdad, prompting a secular Kurdish politician to complain that the United States has sided with the Shiites:

> It's shocking. It doesn't fit American values. They have spent so much blood and money here, only to back the creation of an Islamist state . . . I can't believe that's what the Americans really want or what the American people want.

"Perhaps the Americans are negotiating to get a deal at any cost," he continued, "but we will not accept a constitution at any cost."

This is a remarkable development. It may reflect excessive eagerness in Washington to maintain some momentum on the political front, at a time when large areas of Iraq remain affected by an open-ended guerrilla insurgency. Accepting concessions that would ensure a swift adoption of the Iraqi constitution may be seen as a way out of the looming imbroglio. Nevertheless, Washington's acceptance of the notion that Islam is to be the foundation of Iraq's democracy is light years away from the concept of "spreading democracy in the Middle East" that has been used as a justification for the war in Iraq. It is extremely unpalatable, but less so than the continuation of an open-ended military engagement that is draining American blood and treasure at a time when we are facing new challenges around the world and experiencing unsuspected weaknesses at home.

A policy that includes skillful diplomacy in Asia, a gradual constructive disengagement from the Middle East, and an ever-greater reliance on alternatives to oil for our energy needs is a sound alternative to the quest for hegemony and the resulting containments, deployments, and long-term commitments. It is dictated by common sense, experience, and a sober assessment of the American interest. c

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Is Mexico the Next Colombia?

by Ted Galen Carpenter

Despite recent improvements in the overall security situation in Colombia, the Bush administration remains worried about that country. Washington's nightmare scenario is the emergence of a narcotrafficking state allied with extremist political elements and terrorist organizations. U.S. leaders are sufficiently concerned about that possibility that they are ready to continue America's extensive antinarcotics aid to Bogotá for several more years.

The fears about Colombia are not unfounded, but U.S. policymakers have a serious problem brewing much closer to home—in Mexico. The drug trade in Mexico has mushroomed in recent years. Five years ago, Thomas Constantine, then head of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, told Congress that the power of Mexican drug traffickers had grown "virtually geometrically" over the previous five years and that corruption throughout the country was "unparalleled." Matters have grown substantially worse since his testimony.

Mexico is now a major source of heroin for the U.S. market as well as the principal transit and distribution point for cocaine coming in from South America. People both inside and outside Mexico have begun to worry that the country may descend into the maelstrom of corruption and violence that has long plagued Colombia, the chief drug-source nation in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, Mexicans now openly speak of the "Colombianization" of their country.

Elizabeth Wolf

True, Mexico does not face a large-scale radical political insurgency like that afflicting Colombia. The absence of such an insurgency is an important difference because it means that there are no significant anti-American political forces that can exploit the illegal drug trade for revenues to fund their cause. Nevertheless, the similarities between the situations in Colombia and Mexico are greater than the differences, and Washington has been slow to react to that troubling reality.

In just the past few months, there have been several alarming developments. Rival drug gangs in numerous cities—especially cities along the border with the United States—are waging ferocious turf battles. Several of those struggles, including the one in and around the popular resort city of Cancun, have involved present or former police officers.

The worst situation exists in the border city of Nuevo Laredo. There, the level of violence—and the level of police corruption—reached the point in early June that Mexico's national government suspended that entire police force and sent in the federal police to patrol the streets. For President Vicente Fox's administration, the final straw came when Nuevo Laredo's new police chief was assassinated on June 8, just hours after his appointment.

Federal authorities proceeded to purge the city's police force. After being required to take polygraph exams, 305 of the 765 police officers were dismissed. Indeed, 41 of them were arrested for attacking the federal police when those units arrived in the city. The "new and improved" Nuevo Laredo police were put back on the streets in late July, wearing new uniforms with white shirts. The white color was chosen deliberately, according to Mexican federal authorities, to demonstrate that they were a trustworthy new entity. Those officials apparently were serious.

Aside from the considerable doubt that the purge of the local police would have any lasting benefit, the federal takeover of law enforcement had no meaningful impact on the extent of violence in Nuevo Laredo. Indeed, the number of drug-related killings actually went *up* during that period.

The fiasco with the Nuevo Laredo police is just one indication of the mounting corruption within Mexico's political and law-enforcement systems. Earlier this year, evidence came to light that some of the country's biggest drug kingpins were still running their organizations even while they were inmates in supposedly high-security prisons. The power of the drug organizations is generating fear throughout the country. There is even concern that ruthless drug gangs may have targeted Vicente Fox for assassination, and security around the president has been tightened.

All of this is familiar to those who have studied the impact of the drug trade on Colombia over the past two decades. Another Colombian pattern also is beginning to emerge in Mexico: the branching out of the drug gangs into kidnapping and other lucrative sources of revenue. That aspect has made Colombia the kidnapping capital of the world in recent years. Now, the same phenomenon is becoming noticeable in Mexico. Indeed, several American citizens traveling in Mexico have been victimized. That danger reached such an alarming level that the U.S. State Department issued a travel alert in January—much to the annoyance of the Mexican government.

It would be a tragedy if the corruption and violence that has plagued Colombia also engulfs Mexico. Such a development would automatically be of grave concern to the United States. Colombia is reasonably far away; Mexico is our next-door neighbor and a significant economic partner in the North America Free Trade Agreement. Chaos in that country would inevitably impact Americans—especially those living in the Southwest.

It should not come as a surprise, though, if Mexico is on the path to becoming the next Colombia. The trade in illegal drugs is a multi-billion-dollar enterprise, with the United States as the principal retail market, and Mexico is a key player. Rival gangs are willing to do

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whatever is necessary to gain control of that trade.

U.S. policy seems to assume that, if the Mexican government can eliminate the top drug lords, their organizations will fall apart, thereby greatly reducing the flow of illegal drugs to the United States. Thus, U.S. officials have rejoiced at the willingness of President Vicente Fox's administration to make the capture of major drug-trafficking figures a high priority. But that is the same assumption that U.S. officials used with respect to the crackdown on the Medellin and Cali cartels in Colombia during the 1990's. Subsequent developments proved the assumption to be erroneous. The elimination of the Medellin and Cali cartels merely decentralized the Colombian drug trade. Instead of two large organizations controlling the trade, today some 300 much smaller, loosely organized groups do so.

The arrests and killings of numerous top drug lords in both Colombia and Mexico over the years have not had a meaningful impact on the quantity of drugs entering the United States. Cutting off one head of the drug-smuggling hydra merely results in more heads taking its place.

Mexico can still avoid going down the same tragic path as Colombia. Time, however, is growing short. Washington had better pay far more attention to the problem than it has to this point, and U.S. officials need to come up with better answers than the ineffectual and discredited policies of the past.

Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author or editor of 16 books on international affairs.

COMMONWEAL

A Different Past

by Troy Kickler

Sometimes historical scholarship tells us more about the present than about the past.

In June 2005, an exhibit of Omar ibn Said's *The Life*, the only known autobiography written by an American black while in bondage, was on display in the lobby of the U.N. headquarters. What made it even more significant was that *The Life* was written in Arabic and included chapters of the Koran. The United Nations displayed the slave narrative—an unusual and noteworthy find, to be sure—not as an historical curiosity but as evidence that the "roots of Islam in America" run deep and that "Islam has created a major, positive impact in the United States."

The discovery of *The Life* has been described as the "tip of the democratic iceberg." Some scholars assert, for instance, that possibly 30 percent of all slaves were Muslims—although there is actual evidence for only a couple hundred. Others offer a more modest claim of ten percent. And the vast majority of this percentage, these scholars claim, were probably like Said: religiously devout, yet educated and broad-minded. He steadfastly adhered to Islam, the story goes, "throughout his long years, along with an openness towards other 'God fearing' people."

Much about Said's life is left unsaid, however—probably because it complicates the simple and anachronistic presentation of a modern-day multiculturalism in the antebellum South.

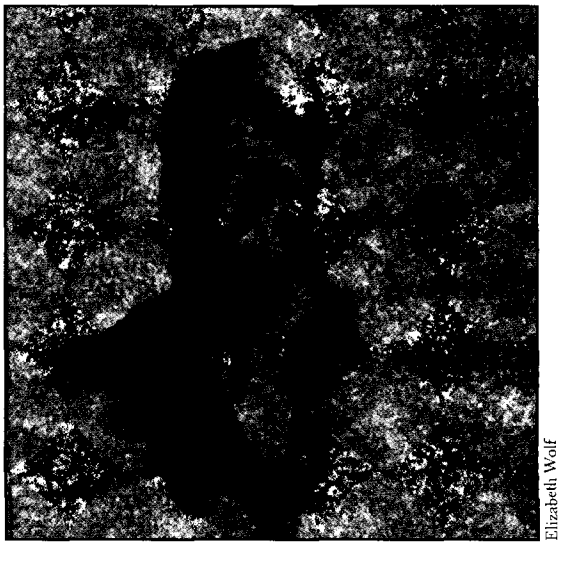
Born in Futa Toro, a Fula state in what is now Senegal, Said had a privileged childhood. Although some speculate he was of royal pedigree, one thing is sure: Said was born into a wealthy family. The son of a slaveowner, who had approximately 70 slaves (according to Northern missionary reports), Said rarely performed manual labor. At the age of five, he lost his father to tribal warfare. Afterward, he was fortunate to live with an uncle, who enrolled him in schools. Embarking on a 25-year educational journey, he achieved not only literacy and numeracy but knowledge of the art of business negotiation.

There is no question that, while in Africa, Said was a devout Muslim. In his teens and 20's, he waged "holy war against the infidels," gave alms, prayed four or five times per day, regularly attended the local mosque, and even made a pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1807, one year before the U.S. Constitution abolished the importation of slaves, Said was captured by an invading army and shipped to Charleston, South Carolina.

There, he was sold first to a kind master, who died soon after acquiring him. His second master, recalled Said, was a "complete infidel, one who had no fear of God at all." Slightly built and unaccustomed to manual labor, Said was beaten frequently for failing to fulfill daily work requirements. So, he ran away. Wandering through the Carolinas exhausted and no doubt bewildered by his circumstances, he sneaked one night into a country church to pray, where he was spotted by a young boy. Shortly thereafter, he was captured by a slave patrol and then imprisoned in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

In jail, Said fascinated jailers by writing Arabic on the walls. Soon, people visited the jail to see his elegant handwriting. Eventually, Bob Mumford, the sheriff of Cumberland County, released Said from jail to meet with Mumford's brother-in-law, James Owen, a former state legislator who later served one term in Congress and was, for many years, a militia general and president of the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad. After obtaining Said's consent, Owen sought and obtained the legal right to purchase him from his cruel Charleston master, and Said lived out the remainder of his days in Bladen County, North Carolina.

For seven years while living with the Owens family, Said practiced Islam openly and dutifully. He observed Ramadan and read the Koran in Arabic; friends of the Owens had provided a copy. A spiritual man, Said listened curiously to the daily Bible readings of Jim Owen. In time, "Uncle Moreau" (the name many whites later gave him) expressed more interest in Christianity and even asked for an Arabic translation of the Bible. No doubt remembering his troubled past in America, Uncle Moreau often expressed his gratitude for the Owens' paternalism: "O ye people of North Carolina, O ye people of South Carolina, O ye people of America all of you," asked Said in his autobiography, "have you among you any two such men as Jim and John Owen?" "These men are good men," he continued. "What food they eat they give me to eat. As they clothe themselves they



Elizabeth Wolf

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clothe me." Even Northern missionaries remarked that, for a slave, Said was fortunate; he knew that, too. Such Christian paternalism certainly contributed to Said's conversion. Sometime during 1819-1822, he professed Christianity and joined the Presbyterian Church, where he was baptized and later missed few Sunday services. Although he denounced the slave trade and considered God to be the only sovereign, Said is reported to have encouraged missionary efforts to Africa and believed that Providence had placed him in America.

Thus, the evidence suggests that Said genuinely converted to Christianity and did not, as many modern scholars claim, "steadfastly hold on to Islam." Most scholars do not mention Northern missionary reports or explain Said's written and spoken statements that reflect Christian doctrine and principles. Those who do dismiss the missionary reports, written by four people over three decades, as uninformed claims and Said's own statements as nothing more than an insincere outward conversion. It is unlikely, however, that Uncle Moreau, a house slave, fooled the entire Owens family for more than 50 years. And why would he want to? As a slave of Jim Owen, he could openly read the Koran and pray to Allah; he worked sparingly; and his Arabic literacy had made him a local celebrity. He had no practical reason to convert to placate Jim Owen.

In their evangelical fervor, certainly, Northern missionaries many times exaggerated the success of their outreach efforts and the need for them in the South. A leader in the American Colonization Society, Ralph Randolph Gurley, in particular, seems to overstate Said's religious enthusiasm. Yet after dismissing evangelical hyperbole, a researcher can find the accounts reliable in many ways. In fact, Said's words, written in Arabic, reinforce much of what the whites described. Said wrote,

> They [the Owens family] permit me to read the gospel of God, our Lord, and Savior, and King; who regulates all our circumstances, our health and wealth, and who bestows his mercies willingly, not by constraint. According to the power I open my heart, as to a great light, to receive the true way, the way of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

Paraphrasing Scripture, he also stated, "The law was given by Moses but grace and truth were by the Jesus the Messiah."

Current descriptions of Said's literacy are also misleading and distorting. Though a fascinating and, in many ways, accomplished figure, Said is being presented by scholar-activists, desperate to uncover an antebellum Islamic underground, as erudite. A friend of mine, a scholar of Islam, who is almost fluent in Arabic, commented that Said's Arabic passages contain elementary grammatical errors—real gaffes that someone fully literate is unlikely to make. At the beginning of his narrative, Said even admitted, "I cannot write my life because I have forgotten much of my own language."

Omar ibn Said is a very important historical figure—not because he brings to light a hidden yet substantial number of Muslims who have contributed greatly to this country, but because an honest study of his life reveals that many mold history into what they wish it had been and use that distorted past to forge America into what they hope it to be.

Troy Kickler is the director of the John Locke Foundation's North Carolina History Project.

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by George McCartney

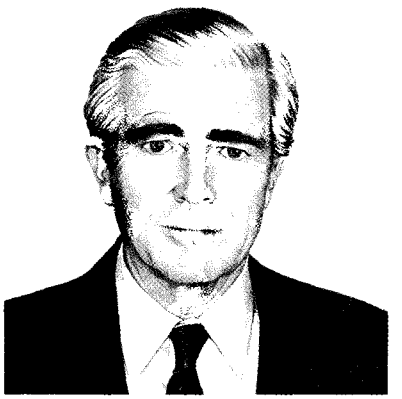
Redemptive Weeding

What's in your medicine chest? Aspirin, ibuprofen, antibiotics? Let me prescribe another medicine: John Le Carré's disturbing novel, *The Constant Gardener* (2001), and its recent screen adaptation directed with *rat-a-tat-tat* urgency by Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Meirelles. You will never think about pharmaceutical companies in quite the same way, unless, of course, you are already aware of how vast sectors of this industry have been taken over by corporate charlatans.

While many complain about pharmaceutical prices, most of us like to think of the industry as one that is fighting honorably to protect us from the natural shocks of living with microbes and wayward cells. Ever since penicillin was developed in the 1940's, we have been taught to trust each new wonder drug as one more milestone in our march to a perfectly disease-free world. Over the past 60 years, however, well-educated confidence men—the descendants, no doubt, of an earlier era's patent-medicine hucksters—have gained influential positions in many of the pharmaceutical giants and have exploited the public's trust unconscionably. These gentlemen stand ever-ready to suborn governments, rig drug trials, bribe the medical profession, and plunder the unsuspecting public—all in the mighty cause of profits, their shareholders' preferred therapy. They routinely mark up their drugs 20, 30, or more times over their real cost and recklessly rush new remedies onto the market. Should anyone have the temerity to question their policies, they huffily respond that their prices reflect their high research costs. As for failed drugs, they are the unfortunate but unavoidable consequence of trying to deliver superior healthcare. They fail to mention that they routinely avail themselves of publicly subsidized research conducted in academic and government laboratories. Nor do they acknowledge their practice of drastically reducing their R&D costs by copying other companies' successful drugs. The cox-2 inhibitor Vioxx is the perfect example. Inspired by Celebrex, Pfizer's $3.3 billion per year home run, Merck decided to play piggy-back with its own version of this arthritis pain reliever. In order not to run afoul of Pfizer's patent, Merck reformulated and renamed what was essentially the same medication, claiming it was more effective. This was true in some instances. It occasionally relieved patients of their pain permanently by giving them fatal heart attacks.

These exploitative and dangerous policies caught Le Carré's eye a few years ago, and he decided to air them in *Gardener*. He located his narrative in Kenya and invented a Swiss pharmaceutical concern, KVH, whose advertising includes the tag line, "The world is our clinic"—a slogan brimming with portent. KVH, we learn, has developed an experimental drug designed to combat tuberculosis. With the collaboration of the readily corruptible Kenyan government and the behind-the-scenes support of the British government, KVH is using the largely illiterate Kenyan population to test and refine its aptly named drug, Dypraxa, always making sure that, before being inoculated, their uncomprehending patients check off a card stating they are giving their "informed consent" to being used as guinea pigs. KVH has determined there is a global TB epidemic on the horizon, and they are racing other pharmaceutical firms to come up with the drug that everyone will need to fend off infection. Wall Street expects to make billions in this "tuberculosis market," and KVH hopes to be a principal player.

Dypraxa kills TB alright, but it sometimes kills its patients. Rather than halting the trials, KVH makes the economic decision to continue them, reformulating the drug as they go to find a safer rate of toxin delivery. They are determined not to fall behind in the race to come up with a cure that they can sell in the developed world. Meanwhile, Kenyans continue to die. Sound familiar? AIDS patients underwent a similar experience with the early use of the antiretroviral drug AZT that Wellcome, now part of GlaxoSmithKline, rushed to market in 1984. First developed in 1964 as a cancer drug, AZT was deemed too toxic to be used safely. Pleading urgency and a patient population demanding immediate treatment, Wellcome took AZT off the shelf and released it without the usual mandatory trials. As a result, tens of thousands died, including many HIV patients who had displayed no symptoms and may have needed no treatment of any kind. Le Carré seems to have had GlaxoSmithKline, a.k.a. GSK, in mind when he gave his fictional pharma KVH its initialed identity. It is also of interest to note that TB is often called AIDS in Africa.



The Constant Gardener

Produced by Potboiler Productions and Scion Films
Directed by Fernando Meirelles,
Screenplay by Jeffrey Caine
from John Le Carré's novel
Distributed by Focus Features

It is against KVH's skullduggery that the narrative introduces its protagonists, Justin Quayle (Ralph Fiennes) and his wife, Tessa (Rachel Weisz).

Quayle, a career diplomat, is the perfect gentleman, unfailingly polite and almost painfully diffident. For his niceness, he is repaid with contempt by his colleagues, who think him an over-educated wimp, quailing from anything unpleasant—such as, say, his wife's suspected affair with a Belgian Congolese doctor, Arnold Bluhm (Hubert Koundé). And, indeed, Quayle gives color to their estimate with his quiet demeanor and constant pruning. As Tessa says of him, he "dreams of a world without weeds." Having concluded many years earlier that human beings are quite hopeless, Justin has no illusions about his efforts in the foreign office. Although he is officially called on to mouth such phrases as "Diplomacy is the soul of civilization," his aspirations are limited to tempering contemporary barbarism with his personal decency. Otherwise, he has taken Candide's advice and tends to his own garden. Well into his 40's, he had managed to live without

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any deeper commitments, never marrying but rather availing himself of bored wives charmed by his cultivation and kindness. He calls to mind one of Evelyn Waugh's terminally decent gentlemen, such as Tony Last in *A Handful of Dust*. He is entirely unobjectionable, the kind of fellow you can depend upon to decorate a distinguished gathering of well-heeled worldlings, someone who would never raise his voice or utter a troubling opinion. So reliable is he that the Foreign Office's high commissioner chooses him to deliver his speeches when he cannot bother showing up in person. It is on just such an assignment in London that he meets Tessa, a 24-year-old fledgling barrister and born rebel, a Roman Catholic troublemaker in a well-mannered Protestant kingdom. The attraction between these polar opposites is immediate and fatal. Tessa thinks Justin's prudence will protect her not just from others but, principally, from herself. He finds her reckless passion and her talent for utter commitment to people and causes irresistible, if trying at times. As he remarks, she is that rare thing, "a lawyer who really believes in justice."

Taking an assignment in Nairobi, Quayle settles down with Tessa and goes about his uneventful life of diplomacy at the office while meticulously gardening at his new home. Tessa, meanwhile, plunges into social activism, focusing on the Kenyan poor living in the slums of Kibera. In the process, she discovers KVH's drug testing and decides to investigate. She realizes that not only is the drug dangerous, its use deprives the Kenyans from receiving safe TB medications. Appalled, she writes a carefully researched report on her findings with Dr. Bluhm's help. When the Foreign Office's high commissioner in London learns of her study, he orders it squelched and her stopped. No wonder. He has been quietly serving KVH interests in return for their pledge to open a large plant in Wales. Furthermore, he has hopes of one day being appointed to KVH's board of directors after he retires from government service.

From this point, the narrative becomes more like Le Carré's earlier espionage thrillers. Mayhem breaks out, and people go undercover. I will say no more other than to make some observations about the performances and the direction of this extraordinary film.

Ralph Fiennes was born to play Justin Quayle. With his lean, almost ascetic body and deep, reflective eyes, he perfectly embodies a quiet man who thinks too much, the epitome of the retiring gentleman. When Tessa runs afoul of the powers-that-be, however, he takes fire. His soft face hardens, his usually evasive eyes now bore through his newly recognized enemies. He becomes a presence, an unstoppable moral force.

As Tessa, Rachel Weisz is a thorough surprise. In her other films, she has never seemed more than standard feminine decoration, but here, she displays a wily intensity, by turns driven and flirtatious, a woman with a cause who has not lost her girlish *savoir faire*. All the other performers—English and African—are also fine. They seemed to have been inspired by the narrative and Meirelles' direction. As the Kenyan head of chancery, Danny Huston is an unctuous careerist, and, as the Foreign Office's high commissioner, Bill Nighy perfectly incarnates the effete patrician phony who assumes everyone else was born to serve his whims. As for the direction, Meirelles has cleverly simulated Le Carré's fractured narrative technique, shuttling back and forth over the story's incidents with a jittery camera so that plot revelations jump out at us in fits and starts from behind veils of deceit. Despite some changes to make the conclusion more palatable to the general audience, Meirelles has been quite faithful to Le Carré's concerns, especially his primary theme: the need to confront the corporate state's evil by means of individual sacrifice. In an article Le Carré published simultaneously with the release of his novel, he explains he could have illustrated the dehumanizing effects of huge economic interests with the tobacco or oil industries, but big pharma "had everything: the hopes and dreams we have of it; its vast, partly realised potential for good; and its pitch-dark underside, sustained by corporate cant, hypocrisy, corruption and greed."

The necessity of sacrifice to preserve one's soul in a world of massively organized politico-economic forces has been Le Carré's brief ever since his 1963 novel *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, in which his protagonist, espionage agent Alec Leamas, is compared to a priest several times. One character even misspells his name as Le Mass. At the novel's end, Leamas offers up his life not for England or Western democracy but—quixotically, by the world's standards—for a single individual, the one good person in the story, Liz Gold. She is the well-meaning, naive Marxist who becomes ensnared in his assignment to rehabilitate a former Nazi now heading up East Germany's intelligence operations while collaborating with the British. When Leamas finds he cannot save Liz's life, he chooses to die with her rather than escape his communist captors behind the Iron Curtain. His act is meant to mortify the Cold War intriguers, both East and West, and momentarily cleanse the world of their hideous denial of the individual's worth. Only the heroism of Christ-like sacrifice, Le Carré seems to say, can redeem a world otherwise drowning in its unacknowledged moral despair.

I do not mean to suggest Le Carré is a religious writer in any usual sense of the term, but, clearly, he is taken with the Christ story and has adapted it—however secularly—as the one viable hope against the darkness of life under the sway of the mega corporate state and its fawning political minions. Unless the individual stands against this benumbing, regimenting force, the idea of the human will go to the wall as it nearly did under fascism and communism. This, finally, is the theme of *The Constant Gardener*.

Commentators keep saying that Le Carré has had to change his focus since the end of the Cold War. I don't think so. He is still after Goliath. Instead of the Soviet Union and the political reaction it induced in the West, he now takes aim at something that is almost, if not just, as threatening: the juggernaut of gargantuan capitalism intent on flattening us until we are all morally supine subjects of the global consumer society. ☙

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Synthetic Syntheses

Sam Francis's most enduring, as well as trenchant, political insight may have been his perception of what he caustically described as "the unique achievement of the political genius of the modern era." Francis dubbed this "anarcho-tyranny"—"a kind of Hegelian synthesis of two opposites," he explained, in which the failure of the state to enforce protective law is coupled with the enforcement of oppressive law by the state to tyrannical ends. Under anarcho-tyranny, the underclass—rampaging blacks, illegal aliens invading from south of the border—is by and large tolerated or ignored in its behavior, while the law-abiding middle classes and that part of the upper class that is not directly incorporated into the ruling elite are criminalized through unfair taxation, social engineering, antigun legislation, "hate crime" statutes, and other forms of legislative and judicial harassment. Anarcho-tyranny is the strategy by which a dictatorially minded ruling class exploits the lower orders for the purpose of grinding the middling majority between upper and nether millstones. Its primary and essential aim is the concentration of political and economic control exclusively in the hands of the governing elite and its apparatchiks—exactly in the manner, and to the same purpose, that the Communist Party gained absolute control of the Soviet Union in the 1920's. Anarcho-tyranny is about the consolidation and expansion of raw *power*, not the realization of an ideological vision—just as American capitalism in its postmodern form is concerned not with the patriotic aim of maximizing the position of the United States internationally, or the ideological one of spreading democratic capitalism throughout the world, but with the creation of a wealth-generating dynamo destined to be not solely the wonder but the central defining reality of the universe.

Anarcho-tyranny is paralleled by a twin synthesis whose aim is indeed ideological and to which power, being instrumental, is secondary. This synthesis might be called libertine-Puritanism, or Puritan-libertinism: the "creative" juxtaposition of unbridled sexuality with a bluenose condemnation of liquor, tobacco, rich food, red meat, overweight, physical unfitness, blood sports, guns, and traditional male behavior (other than extramarital sex), combined with an energetic enthusiasm for genetic engineering and cloning. Libertine-Puritanism is both eager for and demanding of power as a means for realizing its vision of the new moral order, detached from traditional morality founded in religious law, which it quite rightly recognizes as the prerequisite for the creation of the New Man fit to dwell in a recreated—and strictly regimented—world. Toward its achievement, the ethic of entirely unregimented freedom-below-the-belt is an invaluable and, indeed, indispensable tool. As for the end itself, which is nothing less than the creation of Heaven-on-Earth, in which all mankind will be as physically perfect as show animals and long-lived as gods, power is handy as well. In *Brave New World*, Huxley cedes the future more to libertine-Puritanism than to anarcho-tyranny. (There is plenty of soft tyranny in his New World, but no anarchy of the political sort at all; the same is true of Orwell's dystopia, though, in all other respects, Huxley's prophetic vision differed from, and was truer than, that of *1984*.) In the post-Christian West, it may be that the pseudoreligious aspect of libertine-Puritanism makes it more dangerous—because more seductive—than anarcho-tyranny, at least in the long run. From the vantage point of the United States of America in the year 2005, a tax rebellion or a popular movement against underclass crime and illegal immigration seems a good deal more likely than does a crusade to outlaw divorce or the destruction of embryos for stem-cell research.

Synthesis in politics, as in philosophy, is very often a sign that someone is attempting to get away with dishonesty for a purpose, or purposes, best known to himself. Mixed, or republican, government is not the result of a "synthesis" of democracy and monarchy, or totalitarianism and anarchy, any more than Unitarianism is a "synthesis" of Judaism and Christianity. Usually, the dishonesty in attempting to reconcile contradictions amounts to trying to have one big thing both ways, for ends as dishonest and self-serving as the means. All too often, moreover, syntheses are constructed from the modern passion for "creativity," a word that itself developed within the Marxist context. As Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) has written, "Creativity means that in a universe that in itself is meaningless and came into existence through blind evolution, man can creatively fashion a better world." ("It may be," he adds, "that in such visions a cry for freedom is to be heard, a cry that in a world totally in control of technology becomes a cry for help.") Finally, contradictory combinations unnaturally induced, in human affairs as in nature, have a way of producing catastrophic results—as was demonstrated 60 years ago last July, on the Jornada del Muerto in southern New Mexico at a place called Trinity.

Those who do not work with God in history end up working against Him. This appears to be an historical (as well as theological) axiom that admits, to my knowledge, of absolutely no exception. Man bends toward transcendence as a plant grows toward the sun. And if he will not achieve transcendence through God, he is impelled to attempt to achieve it through himself. This has been the modern project, lasting already for half a millennium at least, and showing few signs at present of abating, but rather the opposite. Man is impelled also by the desire for achievement—paradoxically achieved through work, which is the curse of Adam. And he is never content with achievement solely but desires and works to perfect that achievement as well. Anarcho-tyranny and libertine-Puritanism both strive to accomplish tyranny. But the tyranny they envision is not the tyranny of the present, just as the economic system envisioned by Wall Street, London City, Frankfurt, and Shanghai is not the present-day system but the radi-

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cally—almost unimaginably—enhanced one of tomorrow. In modern parlance and understanding, "changed," of course, means "improved." (Detroit works to build something superior, in efficiency and everything else, to last year's Ford.) Financiers today are at work to construct an economy that quite simply will not be of this world, which is to say *our* world—the world in which we live today. Similarly, the architects of anarcho-tyranny are hard at work planning a tyranny that is not of this world, while libertine-Puritanism has in mind a people that are not of this world and, finally, a world that is not of this world.

Superficially, it might appear that anarcho-tyranny and libertine-Puritanism have divergent, actually opposed, ends. What the two share, however, is a principal means toward those ends. And it is at that point, concerning this matter of means, that anarcho-tyranny and libertine-Puritanism intersect, *libertinism* being only another word for sexual anarchy (the sole anarchic expression to command popular enthusiasm in the middle-class suburbs *and* the ghettos).

Libertinism . . . anarchy . . . *chaos*—an ancient word, charged with Grecian nobility, force, and truth:

> Keep order in space,
> And order in time,
> For disorder is chaos,
> And chaos is crime.

For the England in which this bit of anonymous verse was written, chaos was the greatest evil imaginable—quite literally, the work of the Devil. For the would-be synthesizers, it is simply the step in planning at which the creative destruction necessary to the fulfillment of their ambitions occurs. Out of confusion, destruction, chaos, a new world will be built, constructed and consecrated to their own specifications and their particular purposes.

> Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
> And unawares Morality expires.
> Nor public flame nor private dares to shine;
> Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
> Lo! Thy dread empire Chaos is restor'd,
> Light dies before thy uncreating word;
> Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the curtain fall,
> And universal darkness buries all.

If all goes according to plan, the curtain will remain down only for so long as is necessary for the dismantlement of the original set and the construction of its replacement to be accomplished. And when the curtain rises again, it will be the hand of the Tyrant—not the Anarch—that lifts it. If the world breaks toward chaos at present, chaos is unlikely to prove long-lasting. Insofar as the world, meaning the Western world, ever was "free," the age of freedom is rapidly reaching its end. Tyranny, it seems, is set to increase; anarchy, to decrease—after, like St. John the Baptist, it has fulfilled its purpose, which is to prepare the way for tyranny by making tyranny nearly inevitable.

Orwell warned that, when words lose their meaning, men lose their freedom. In these days, however, the misuse and abuse of language, though significant, is not the chief weapon of advancing tyranny. Propaganda is rife—in fact, it is everything, or nearly so—but the main danger is not really Newspeak. It is conceptual structures, not word structures. Intellectuals create historical syntheses, not active people—who, insofar as these syntheses amount to an accurate description of the world, simply act them out. That is not to say that certain of these people are unaware of what they are up to, where they are going, and where they intend to take the world, if they can. As a general rule, a society in contradiction to itself to the degree that ours is, and at the elevated social and political levels at which fundamental contradictions are recognizable, is not just a troubled society but a society in which trouble is being actively contemplated. And so it is also a devious and deceitful society—one based on lies, in which lying has become its *modus vivendi* in its internal as well as in its external relations. Worse, it lies to itself about its own nature—what it is today, and what it has in mind to become tomorrow.

Societies, nations, like individuals, whose chief subject of conversation is themselves, are usually and rightly suspect. And what they have to say about themselves is never to be trusted, it being a pretty certain rule of thumb that what they say *of* themselves is the exact opposite of the truth about them. Protected (as they think) by the collective "we" from the appearance and charge of egotism, societies are far more shameless in conferring lavish praise on themselves than individuals typically are—on those occasions, that is, when individuals are speaking for themselves, individually. It is rare to hear a person describe himself forthrightly as "compassionate" or "loving," though I once heard a man declare, to my discomfort, that he was "pious." (The truly odd thing in this instance is that I should have felt compelled to agree with him, if asked directly for my corroboration.) But a compassionate society does not make the abortion of its children a sacrament, nor does a loving one offer no-fault divorce or divorce-on-demand, anymore than a Christian society legalizes adultery and sodomy and makes Madonna a millionaire. Similarly, a "free" society does not promote the growth of tyranny at the highest levels, nor a "country of laws" tolerate anarchy at the lowest ones. (Only a schizoid or, as we have seen, dishonest country is comfortable with a synthesis of the two.) "Decent" societies do not encourage libertinism either from philosophical conviction or for reasons of political advantage, while "free" and "democratic" ones do not agitate for the totalitarian regimentation demanded by a puritanical regime that would have appalled historical Puritanism by its antiseptic plasticity as much as by its sexual license and godlessness. As for democracy, democratic nations do not assume responsibility for whipping authoritarian societies into some sort of weird approximation of themselves, a thing none of the great empires of history presumed—or cared—to do.

Organic development, not Hegelian synthesis, is what characterizes free societies, true societies, *real* societies, as distinguished from incoherent ersatz ones, such as that which the United States has grown into over the past century-and-a-half. If anarcho-tyranny and libertine-Puritanism make no sense, that is because the nation that developed them fails to make sense, as well. c

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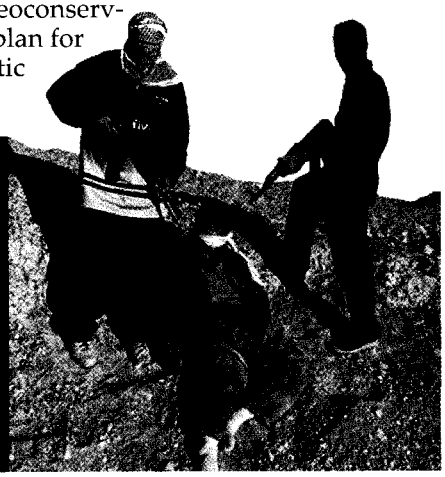

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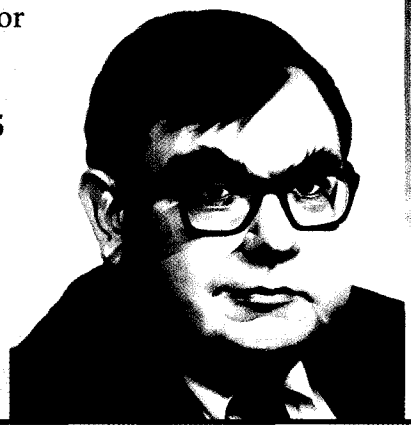

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